

## A Fissile Family

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/23485840) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/23485840>.

### Rating:

Teen And Up Audiences

### Archive Warning:

No Archive Warnings Apply

### Category:

Gen

### Fandom:

僕のヒーローアカデミア | Boku no Hero Academia | My Hero Academia

### Relationships:

Bakugou Katsuki & Shigaraki Tomura | Shimura Tenko, Bakugou Katsuki & Dabi, Bakugou Katsuki & Takami Keigo | Hawks, Bakugou Katsuki & Yagi Toshinori | All Might, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Bakugou Katsuki, Bakugou Katsuki & Toga Himiko, Bakugou Katsuki & Midoriya Izuku, Bakugou Katsuki & Class 1-A, Bakugou Katsuki & League of Villains, Bakugou Katsuki & Eri

### Characters:

Bakugou Katsuki, Shigaraki Tomura | Shimura Tenko, Dabi (My Hero Academia), Takami Keigo | Hawks, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Bubaigawara Jin | Twice, Toga Himiko, Sako Atsuhiro | Mr. Compress, Hikiishi Kenji | Magne, League of Villains (My Hero Academia), Kurogiri (My Hero Academia), Midoriya Izuku, Yagi Toshinori | All Might, Sensei | All For One, Ujiko Daruma, Class 1-A (My Hero Academia), Eri (My Hero Academia), Chisaki Kai | Overhaul

### Additional Tags:

Kidnapping, Crack Treated Seriously, Sort Of, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, Hurt/Comfort, Fluff, Humor, Child Neglect, Implied/Referenced Child Abuse, Families of Choice, Emotional Manipulation, Emotional/Psychological Abuse, Bakugou Katsuki-centric, Bakugou Katsuki Swears A Lot, Bakugou Katsuki is Bad at Feelings, Bakugou Katsuki Has PTSD - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Bakugou Katsuki Needs a Hug, Bakugou Katsuki is So Done, BAMF Bakugou Katsuki, Dabi is Todoroki Touya, Dabi is a Todoroki, Good Sibling Dabi (My Hero Academia), BAMF Dabi (My

Hero Academia), Dabi (My Hero Academia) Redemption, Protective Shigaraki Tomura | Shimura Tenko, Big Brother Shigaraki Tomura | Shimura Tenko, Shigaraki Tomura redemption, Toga Himiko is a Good Friend, League of Villains as Family (My Hero Academia), League of Villains Shenanigans (My Hero Academia), Takami Keigo | Hawks Being an Idiot, Takami Keigo | Hawks is a Mess, Alternate Universe - Everyone Lives/Nobody Dies, mostly - Freeform, I mean, some people will die but it's limited and trust me you will not miss them, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Canon-Typical Violence, Post-Kamino Ward Arc (My Hero Academia), Protective Dabi (My Hero Academia), Mental Health Issues, Implied/Referenced Brainwashing

**Language:**

English

**Series:**

Part 1 of [The Forced Family AU](#)

**Collections:**

[Cosmonauts Fic Recs](#), [progress](#), [wwwwww](#),  
[MHA\\_Continue\\_Reading](#), [Almost every Bakugou fanfic I have read](#)

**Stats:**

Published: 2020-04-05 Updated: 2020-07-13 Words: 40,939  
Chapters: 3/16

# A Fissile Family

by [Sif \(Rosae\)](#)

## Summary

Katsuki Bakugou was kidnapped. The heroes underestimated the League of Villain's strength, forcing a 16 year old to fight alone in a desperate attempt to escape. It wasn't enough.

Having been recaptured by the League, Katsuki anticipated the worst. Torture. Blackmail. Brainwashing.

He didn't expect to find himself forcibly incorporated into a messy, dramatic, and just plain ridiculous family. Honestly, he thinks he might've preferred the torture. At least that was straight forward and didn't involve him accidentally getting attached to murderous jerks.

Now it's all up to him to escape from this disaster, avoiding danger lurking in the shadows, deciding who he can really trust, and maybe, just maybe, learning some important lessons about what it means to be a hero and a good person along the way.

This is a found family story, except when I say 'found' I mean it in the 'Ah, crap, those assholes found me again' sorta way. So buckle up, because it's going to be one hell of an adventure.

## Notes

\*rubs my little gremlin hands together\*

Alright, I've been working on this for quite awhile, so I'm pleased to introduce y'all to the Forced Family AU! Tags will be updated as the story goes along. I will be ignoring large chunks of canon for this fic, and a good amount of any current manga revelation. Just roll with it.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

# But Nobody Came

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Katsuki tried.

He fought with everything he had. He pushed himself harder than he ever had before, trying to move his fight so All-Might could use his full power. There were six of them, and he was all on his own, but he'd been managing. This was nothing new.

Then All-Might took a hit.

And Katsuki made a dumb choice.

In the heat of the moment, he switched directions, dodging around Ms. Stabby to launch an attack at the masked fucker who'd *dared* hurt his hero. Power crackled in his hands, he should've paced himself, but he didn't. All his energy, all his rage, all his fear was poured into his attack.

His explosion connected just as a hand wrapped around his foot.

Fuck. Never take your eyes off your opponent. Katsuki knew that. *He knew that* . But he'd done it anyways.

Everything went black. The last thing he heard was the villain he hit cursing and All-Might shouting his name. It was a nice way to go. Knowing that he tried. But once a-fucking-gain, even his best wasn't good enough.

Nothing he ever did was.

Once again, he'd fucked up, and once again he was left to deal with the consequences of his failure. Not that he deserved anything less, god fucking damnit, how stupid did he have to be to end up kidnapped *again* ?

Katsuki was supposed to be better at handling this by now. And he'd even had help! All-Might himself had showed up to give him a hand and he'd still managed to fuck it all up. The thought of his teacher made his throat constrict and lungs ache. If nothing else, hopefully his dumbass move had done *something*.

Hopefully the only one paying the price for his weakness was him. Even though he knew that wasn't true. He hadn't seen the battlefield for very long, but it'd been in a city. There was no way there weren't any casualties.

All because he couldn't handle a few stupid fucking villains. What sort of pathetic hero was he? For fuck sake, he was 16 years old and he was still getting kidnapped like he was some helpless little kid. Maybe that's all he'd ever be. Maybe it was better for everyone if he just fucking died here-

Katsuki took a deep breath in. Held it. Then let it back out.

In through the nose. Hold it. Out through the mouth.

In. Hold. Out.

In. Hold. Out.

Okay.

He fucked up. Nothing new there. Throwing himself a pity party wasn't going to jackshit about fixing that. What he needed to do was calm down and focus on getting out of here. Everything else could come afterwards.

After taking a few more deep breaths, Katsuki refocused on the situation at hand. One sense at a time.

First things first, touch. Both his arms were completely encased in front of him. Great. Quirk restraints. These shitty things meant picking any locks was going to be hell. If he even had the movement range to reach the locks.

The restraints on his arms were bound to something. Probably chains. There were chains on his feet too. Oddly enough though, they weren't hard metal. They felt padded, and like there might be a bit of give to them. Huh.

Katsuki was laying down on what felt like a pad of some kind. There was something covering him, maybe more than one thing. Too loose to be straps, so... a blanket? Blankets? Again, weird.

Another deep breath.

Listening wasn't Katsuki's strong suit, but he tried anyway. He strained his ears to try to pick up on any noises, the sound of breathing or footsteps. Anything to indicate he wasn't alone. Nothing.

He could hear the distant hum of machinery, but that was it.

Alright, time to take the last step. Katsuki took a moment to brace himself, then let his eyes slide open.

It was brighter than he thought it would be. Not obnoxiously so, and certainly not the clinical lighting of a lab or medical office, but not the darkness of a normal prison cell either.

Blinking several times, he managed to lift his head up enough to take in his surroundings properly.

As best he could tell, he was lying on a futon in a cell. There were several blankets wrapped around him, all of which were plain black and softer than he would've expected. Not that he would've expected blankets at all from the people who'd kidnapped him. The chains on his arms and feet appeared to connect to the wall behind him, and they appeared to have enough slack to them that he could make his way around the cell.

Other than the futon, and what looked like a small connected bathroom on the left, there wasn't much else to look at. A lone security camera sat up in the far left corner, angled away from the bathroom. Fucking good. The walls were made of thick looking stone, the bars at the front were definitely solid, and the only exit was a sturdy metal looking door. No way he was getting through any of that unless he got these quirk restraints off. Speaking of which-

Katsuki wiggled as best he could, trying to get a decent look at the quirk restraints around his arms without completely dislodging the blankets around him. The cell was too cold for him to get rid of those, since he was still in a t-shirt.

Actually, now that he thought about it, Katsuki shifted to get a better look at his clothing. It was still the same outfit he'd had on at camp, dirt and all. Thank fuck. Even the thought of one of those assholes messing with his clothing while he was out made him want to retch.

From the looks of it though, he wasn't getting out of these restraints any time soon. They were a fucking advanced model, and given how well they fit his arms, the damn things must've been tailored for him. Fuck.

He attempted to lift his head to get a better look at the locking mechanism, only to instantly regret it. His head *ached*. There was a throbbing pain at the base of his skull, and even the slight movement made the room spin like a top as his vision blurred from the force of the pain.

Right. They must've drugged him.

Well, now he was shit out of things to do but wait. Either the drug's effects would wear off enough that he could actually do shit, or one of those assholes would show up. The first would be his preference, but Katsuki wasn't feeling particularly lucky right now.

And who would've guessed that he'd be absolutely fucking right?

He didn't have any real concept of time down here, but it felt like maybe an hour before Mr. Marbles showed up. The dickhead had one of his stupid fucking masks on, and he let himself into the cell with only a brief pause.

Was it worth it to pretend he was sleeping?



"I know you're awake."

Apparently not. Katsuki glared at the man, baring his teeth even though he knew that wasn't going to do shit while he was all chained up.

"Before you make any rash choices, I have been asked to inform you that you were drugged. It was an unfortunate necessity, but one we hopefully won't have to repeat. Right now, you need to drink for your own safety. Food will be good too if you can stomach it, but the fluids are the most important to keep you stable. Can you cooperate for that much? Otherwise, we will have to resort to an IV, and I doubt you'd enjoy that."

Fuck.

Katsuki didn't want to. He really didn't want to.

But his head was still pounding, the pain only getting stronger as time wore on. It didn't help that he knew firsthand how dangerous sedatives could be when someone was dehydrated or on an empty stomach. With his luck, he'd probably had somewhat of a bad reaction to them. Drugs tended to interact poorly with his weird system.

God, as much as he hated to play along with any of this shit, he really didn't have any other choice. His throat was too dry to speak, and like fuck he was gonna let them stick an IV in him. After a few more seconds, Katsuki swallowed his pride and gave a jerky nod.

"Excellent. Hold on for just a moment." Not like he was going to fucking go anywhere else. The creep knelt down next to Katsuki,

producing two marbles from his pocket which were released into a pair of water bottles and a container of what looked like curry. It was hard to tell though. Katsuki's vision was kinda blurry.

"I'm going to sit you up now, brace yourself."

Katsuki took in a breath and squeezed his eyes shut to block out the churning of his stomach as he felt a hand grip his shoulder. The guy was surprisingly gentle about it, bringing him up slowly to rest against the wall behind him. It still made him want to puke. There wasn't anything in his stomach to throw up though, so he was left breathing heavily and fighting the urge to retch anyways.

"Easy, easy now. You're alright."

*'I've been fucking kidnapped, drugged, and I'm two seconds from throwing up my own stomach you motherfucker, I am not fucking 'alright'.'*

Was what he *would've* said, if he could speak. But Katsuki couldn't, he couldn't even open his eyes yet, so he elected to just grimace until he felt a straw tap against his lips.

"It's water with electrolytes and some sugar. It should taste sweet. Drink it slowly."

He wanted to snap that he *knew* that shit. Not worth it or possible right now. Instead, he settled for opening his lips and taking a few hesitant sucks at the offered drink. It was sweet, but not overly so. Usually he couldn't stand sweet shit, but the drink was tolerable. Or maybe he was just so fucking thirsty that anything would taste fine. Probably the second thing.

Drinking was an unfairly time consuming process. The snail's pace and constant breaks were annoying as fuck, but Katsuki knew the drill. Too much and he'd be sick, which would be way worse than the frustration simmering under his skin.

Eventually he finished off the entire bottle. The masked fucker busied himself with tucking away the empty drink and opening up the curry while Katsuki took a moment to breathe and considered his options.

Would not eating be worth it? It was a tough call. The drink had already been refreshing as shit, and Katsuki wasn't sure how much more his stomach could take. Not to mention that he fucking hated the idea of being spoonfed by anyone, let alone this asshole. But fuck, he probably needed the carbs to handle the rest of this shit.

The container was held up just below his mouth and a spoon dipped down to get a decent serving of the curry being offered to him.

It made him feel like a fucking baby or some shit. Once again though, he swallowed his pride and opened his lips enough that he could accept the curry. Just this once. He kept his eyes closed throughout the process and tried to picture smashing the stupid mask on this guy's face to pieces to keep himself calm. It helped a bit. Soon. He just needed to bide his time.

Again, it was a painstaking process. At least the curry didn't taste like absolute shit. Probably. His taste buds were pretty fucked right now. Palatable. The curry was palatable. That was all it needed to be.

He couldn't finish the entire thing, but the dickhead didn't press it when he turned his head away from the spoon. The guy gave Katsuki a minute to ensure he was really full, and then he put the container away. That was it, right? All he wanted to do now was take a fucking nap and hope his head would stop trying to kill him by the time he

woke up.

And then the asshole started pulling off his gloves.

Katsuki couldn't help his instinctive jerk sideways, one that almost sent him toppling in his fruitless attempt to escape.

"Hush, none of that now. I just need to check your temperature, that's all. The cuffs give us a basic idea of your temperature and your heart rate, but Shigaraki wanted me to double-check to be safe. That's all. I promise."

Like fuck Katsuki was trusting this asshole. He couldn't do shit to stop him though. Despite his attempts to squirm away, a hand pressed firmly against his forehead. Another hand was on his shoulder, maybe trying to pin him. Maybe trying to stabilize him. It hardly mattered. All he knew was he wanted both hands to stop fucking touching him.

Against his wishes and pathetically weak protests, the hand stayed on his forehead for several long seconds. It stole information and heat from him. Things he didn't want to share, no matter how harmless they were. It was his skin, and he fucking hated people touching him so much.

Then it was over. He was being lowered back down to the futon and the blankets were being tucked over him once more. One of those awful hands, although thankfully regloved, patted his shoulder twice.

"Your temperature feels good. Just take it easy for right now. He must've felt Katsuki glare, because after a moment, the asshole added, "Don't worry, you'll be just fine."

Katsuki decided in that exact moment that he hated this guy. Not that that was entirely shocking or anything new. But the point stood.

If only he'd been able to say as much before the fucker walked away. Oh well. He was sure he'd get the chance at some point.

Katsuki hated to admit it, but the food helped a lot. His head cleared, the headache slowly receded, and the haze over his mind that he hadn't even noticed abated bit by bit. Despite feeling better, he didn't try to get up out of his current position. Temperature regulation was shit when someone was drugged up, and he didn't want to take any risks until he was sure that it was completely out of his system. That, and now that he knew they were spying on his heart rate and shit, odds are he wasn't going to be able to do much escape wise. Not yet anyways.

That didn't mean he couldn't plan though, so as he lay on the futon, planning was exactly what he did.

He needed some way of keeping track of the time. Knowing whether it was day or night (and when these fuckers were most active), would be vital for any escape. Particularly if they were watching his vitals. While Katsuki knew he could control his heartbeat and blood pressure if he needed to, enough that it wouldn't trigger any shitty alarms, if there was a person actively watching it then they might still see fluctuations that could tip them off.

The electrical hum that he could hear at the edge of his vision seemed to get quieter and louder, but he couldn't tell what was causing the volume change. Or if there really was a volume change at all. He might just be imagining it.

That meant his best bet was getting information from any 'visitors' on where the fuck he was and what fucking time it was. Then he could try to correlate that shit with the hum. Or maybe if the visits came at regular intervals, then he could use that.

Ideally, a timeframe for his escape would be pretty fucking helpful too. There were a few stupid things he could try, but he didn't want to attempt any of them unless he was sure it was his only option. As of right now he didn't know if they were planning to start torturing or brainwashing him in the next few hours or if he'd be lucky enough to get a few days before they were ready to take that step. He'd need to see if he could bait one of these morons into giving something away.

Speaking of morons-

It was the guy who'd undone his restraints before. The asshole clone machine. Not Katsuki's favorite person, but if he'd had to pick someone out of their shitty emo band to visit him, then Two-face was at the top of his list. If nothing else, this guy was dumb enough to take his chains off once. Katsuki would probably have better luck getting information outta him than anyone else. Plus his habit of talking to himself would probably come in handy.

"Heya! Hope you're doing well!" *"I hope you're rotting in here."*

The guy had food with him. Katsuki eyed it for a long moment. Nope. The drugs seemed to have mostly worn off by now, which meant Katsuki wanted nothing to do with their shitty food.

His stomach felt pretty full anyways. Eating anything else meant he'd risk getting sick, and Katsuki did *not* want to deal with that fucking mess right now.

Undeterred by his glare, the man let himself into Katsuki's cell, an all-to-happy vibe around him.

"Boss wanted me to come check on you, make sure you're doing alright and get some more food in you!" *"I'm going to make you choke on it."*

Relearning to speak took a few seconds, but Katsuki managed it.

"No."

Alright. Well. That was more of a grunt than word per say, but the point got across. The man's face fell. He was oddly expressive for a guy with his whole head covered.

"No, you're not doing alright? Or no to food." *"You're just being a fucking brat."*

"B'th."

Fuck. The guy didn't hesitate to push into Katsuki's space, pressing a hand to his forehead with a dumb concerned expression.

"Hm, you don't feel feverish or too cold." *"He's fucking kidnapped, of course he wouldn't say he's doing alright."*

Half the guy seemed to get it. But it wasn't the half that was in control.

"You should still eat though! It's important to keep your energy up."  
*"I'll force feed this shit to you if I have to."*

Katsuki shook his head, flinching back when the asshole's hand came to rest on his shoulder.

"No."

Again, a single word was all he could manage. He felt the guy tense, as if he was going to pull Katsuki up anyways. Katsuki wiggled away from his hand as best he could. Which wasn't much. If the guy felt like it, he could certainly carry through on that threat. The hand reached out again, and again, Katsuki flinched, though the movement was a bit more pronounced this time. For whatever reason, that got the guy to pause.

"Oh! Are you feeling nauseous?" *"Fucking obviously he is. Just shove the food into him and get it over with."*

Katsuki managed a half nod, trying to respond to the question and ignoring the half of the guy who he'd deemed the bigger asshole. Hopefully the asshole would fucking listen, because if not Katsuki was going to try to aim for him when he inevitably hurled. After a minute or so of the guy mumbling to himself under his breath, he seemed to make up his mind.

"Well, Boss said you were supposed to eat, but making you sick would be bad. And Compress said you ate a lot when he was down here. So I'll wait a bit, and if you aren't feeling any better, then I'll just tell him that!" *"I don't give a fuck."*



He wasn't going to feel any better. But the guy plopped himself down beside Katsuki regardless, and Katsuki figured he might as well try to get some information.

"Time?"

The man's face scrunched up for a moment before he deciphered the word and perked back up.

"Oh! The time! Uh-" *"I'm not telling you."*

Katsuki's vision blurred and his hearing faded for a second as the guy moved, checking his phone maybe? It took several breaths for Katsuki to pull himself back together, just in time to hear the answer.

"It's about half past 8! Uh, pm that is!" *"Kid doesn't need to know any of this shit."* "It really hasn't been that long, only about a day or so? Since we were at the bar, I mean." *"Stop telling him things!"*

Okay, so he wasn't missing that much time. Good. That was good. Taking another few breaths he managed to force himself to speak again after a few false starts.

"Wha' h'ppen'd?"

"Ah, guess you wouldn't remember much, huh?" *"Well keep fucking wondering, I'm don't need to give you any more information, brat."*

"Well, uh, you got All For One, Shigaraki's sensei-" *"It's fucking weird"*

“-with a really strong explosion! It was pretty impressive!” *“You were weak as shit.”* “But anyways, then Compress, the guy with the mask, he managed to grab you and shrink you, so then we all left through the portal, or, well, almost all of us. *“Never liked that fucker anyways.”*

“Then Kurogiri woke up a little bit, I think, and he closed the portal to stop All-Might from following us. And uh, All for One got pretty injured from your explosion apparently. So once we were gone, All-Might took him down. Sort of. Mt. Lady, I think that’s her name? She had to help him because All-Might got kinda small. His quirk ran out I think. That’s what Kurogiri was saying. *“No more All-Might, thank god.”*

Katsuki’s blood turned cold. No. Please dear fucking god no. He couldn’t have-

The guy must’ve seen the look on his face, because he quickly jumped to correct himself.

“Oh no, no! He’s not dead!” *“I wish he was.”* “Please don’t cry, the news said he’s just in the hospital to recover. They said he should be fine though, not even in critical condition!” *“Won’t be a fucking hero anymore though, that’s for sure.”*

Katsuki wanted to snap that he wasn’t going to cry; it’d been ten fucking years since the last time he was pathetic enough to break down like that, but he was too filled with relief to force the words out. All-Might wasn’t dead. Katsuki hadn’t killed him. Sure, it sounded like Katsuki had still monumentally fucked up, somehow causing All-Might to lose his quirk, but he could live with that. He wasn’t sure if he could’ve lived with All-Might’s death being on his hands.

For a little while, the two of them sat in silence before the other got bored of that.

“You hungry now?” *“Missed your fucking chance if you are.”*

Words were beyond him, so Katsuki just shook his head as carefully as he could. The guy debated with himself for a moment, but ultimately decided to take his word for it.

“Hope you feel better soon!” *“Hope it kills you.”*

Then the guy stood, brushed non-existent dust off his legs and turned to leave, thank fuck.

The small interaction left Katsuki exhausted. As soon as the guy was gone, hopefully for a fucking while, Katsuki let himself relax back into the futon, wiggling further under the blankets as best he could and letting his eyes fall shut. His mind and body were both too full of cotton to do much else beyond sleep and hope he felt better in the morning.

Assuming he was still here in the morning.

If not, well, he'll cross that bridge when he gets to it.

When he woke up again, he felt better. A fuck ton better. His body was still sore, but his mind was chugging along at normal speeds, and his arms no longer felt weighed down by lead. Just the restraints on them. But even those felt lighter with the newfound strength in his limbs.

It was enough that he managed to sit up of his own accord when he heard footsteps down the hallway. They were distinctive; loose steps, and a wobbly gait that spoke of someone with no fucks to give. His mind had to strain, but he put the clues together just as the crispy motherfucker himself sauntered into view.

They eyed one another for a long moment. Katsuki refused to blink first.

"Well, you look a bit less like shit. Since the last time I saw you anyways."

"Can't say the same about you, asshole."

The motherfucker laughed as he unlocked the cell, keys in one hand and a bag in another. Honestly, Katsuki was just happy he could speak in complete fucking sentences again, even if his voice was raspy.

"Fair enough, Kid. Good to see you're a bit more chatty. Twice said you weren't up to eating when he stopped by. Feeling any better now?"

He was. He was hungry. Like fuck he was going to admit to it though, now that he wasn't all drugged up.

"Eat shit and die. I don't want anything from you assholes."

Blue eyes studied him too closely as their owner dropped into a lazy seated position a foot or two away from Katsuki. Teeth bared, Katsuki held that gaze as best he could.

"None of it's spiked with any crap. After the mess we just went through drugging you up the first time, it's gonna be injections only from here on out if we have to do any of that again. More precision, a lot less that can go wrong, you know?"

That Katsuki could believe. Oral administration of drugs got messy as shit. Didn't change his mind.

"Don't fucking care."

More watching before the guy shrugged, posture taking on a casual edge to it as he glanced off towards the corner of the room.

"It's no skin off my back, you're only hurting yourself here. I'm not going to force it on you or anything. Still, you seem like a smart kid. Why shoot yourself in the foot when you're already in a shitty situation?"

Fuck. Dickhead had a point. The fact the guy wasn't forcing the matter made Katsuki waiver. Just for a moment.

"Here, at least try to get some fluids down. You're gonna regret it in a few hours if you don't."

There was a straw in front of him, and Katsuki hated himself for it, but he gave in and accepted the drink. He was fucking thirsty. Sucking down the drink was far less of an affair than last time. It took a few minutes at most before he'd finished off the bottle.

Once it was gone, Mr. Staples turned to pick up what looked like fried rice. Katsuki opened his mouth to protest, only to have the asshole cut him off.

"I get it. You're not happy about being here. Don't blame you. But that's not changing any time soon, and you're gonna need to eat. Right?" Before Katsuki could growl out a reply, the guy pressed his point. "Tell you what, if it's the whole getting fed thing that's causing issues for you, you can eat it on your own if you want to. I can't unlock your restraints, but if you're that determined to not have me help you out, then I'm sure you can figure it out. Or I could help you. Your pick."

Somehow, it seemed the guy was legitimately asking. His words were bitchy, but his tone was relatively neutral and judgement free. Ugh. Taking a few seconds, Katsuki considered his options here. Because realistically, not eating wasn't going to work long term.

"I can fucking eat it on my own."

His words were more growl than actual words, but he didn't give a shit. There was no sarcastic quip or taunt in response. Only the tupperware being held up so he could reach it with his mouth. Blue eyes were something between challenging and curious.

Eating out of the dish like he was a fucking dog was humiliating as fuck. Katsuki still preferred it to having any of these assholes feed him. Even if it was degrading, it was better than being so fucking weak and helpless that he needed someone else to help him with something as simple as eating. Weakness was worse than humiliation. Weakness was always worse.

It only took him a few minutes to scarf down most of the fried rice, which was tucked to the side once he'd finished. Katsuki braced

himself for another fucking hand on his forehead (and to try to bite this asshole if he tried it), but it didn't come. Crispy wasn't interested in checking his temperature, but he didn't seem ready to leave either.

Seconds ticked by in which nothing happened. An awkward silence settling between them.

"I'm not joining you incompetent assholes." Dumb thing to say before you were tortured or brainwashed? Yep. Katsuki couldn't think of anything else to say though, so he went with it anyways. "I don't care what fucked up shit you have planned. I'm not gonna become some emo ass motherfucking villain who'd rather whine all day than actually change anything."

The charbroiled dick only snorted at him.

"Don't worry kid, Shigaraki's not interested in hurting you. Hell, he doesn't even like keeping you down here. This shit's all temporary while he's setting up the other crap."

Huh. Okay. Interesting. Also potentially dangerous. 'Other crap' could mean just about fucking anything right now. Although, it sounded like torture was off the table. Which made sense. They wanted him as an ally to fight for them, and as far as he knew, they didn't have a decent healer. But it didn't help him figure out what they were actually planning to do to him. Hm. Katsuki didn't think he could get much out of Flamehead, but it was worth a shot.

"What 'other crap' are you fucking yapping about?"

No dice, he was waved off lazily.

“You’ll see soon enough. Don’t stress about it too much.” Not like he really had anything better to fucking do with his time.

“Like, okay, I get it. You’re 16 and all of this is pretty fucked up, but like I said kid, the boss ain’t interested in hurting you. Doesn’t seem too keen on fucking with that brain of yours either. As long as you keep your head on straight, you’ll probably make it out of this shit alive.”

Katsuki fought to keep his glare steady. It was oddly reassuring though, to hear that. Particularly from this guy- Dabi, right? While Katsuki certainly didn’t fucking trust him, and the guy wasn’t right in the head by any means, he at least came off as a bit more grounded in reality than some of these other assholes. Plus, it wasn’t like he had anything to gain by lying to Katsuki.

“Fucking whatever.” Weak comeback aside, Katsuki resolutely turned his head to glare at the wall. Hopefully whatever plan the creepy hands guy had for him involved a fucking shower and a change of clothes. He felt filthy. Like there was a layer of grime clinging to his skin, and was fucking awful. Not only was it just disgusting in general, but it reminded him too fucking much of that slime fucker.

Dabi hung around for a bit longer, watching Katsuki out of the corner of his eyes. But not intensely. Not like Deku would, with that creepy, soul seeing gaze that made Katsuki feel like an animal in a zoo, or a specimen under a microscope. No, Dabi’s gaze was more of idle curiosity than anything else. Tolerable, even if it was a bit annoying.

After what felt like ages, it seemed the guy had other places to be. He pushed himself to his feet, shuffling the empty water bottle and depleted tupperware back into the bag and turning back to exit the cell. Once the door was relocked, he paused just long enough to give Katsuki an oddly meaningful look.



“Hang in there, Kid.”

“Fuck off.”

This time, Katsuki expected the villain’s amused smirk, and as the guy’s footsteps faded away, he decided that Dabi wasn’t the worst of these dickheads.

Katsuki would still punch him in the face though, if he got the chance. When he got the chance. With any luck.

Given the previous pattern, Katsuki expected to either get a visit from a new member of the league of shitty colorblind goths, or to start over with the Masked fucker.

Lazy footsteps down the hallway proved both guesses wrong. Was it better to have a set pattern or not? Katsuki wasn’t sure. He vaguely preferred Dabi to the shitty magician, but he didn’t like not being able to predict who’d be coming next.

Dabi didn’t look too different. It’d only been a couple of hours after all. Probably. If Katsuki was tracking time correctly. The guy had a bag with him again, different color, about the same size. This time, Katsuki was feeling full enough that he was sure he could refuse eating safely. A bit of hunger was far preferable to going through either humiliation of eating with no hands again.

Only, it seemed Dabi read his mind, because this time it wasn’t a water bottle and a tupperware of food. This time, the other had brought what looked like a smoothie. Katsuki eyed it warily.

“It’s a protein mix, one of the ones that’s meant to replace a full meal. Not the best tasting shit, but I drink ‘em fairly often and they aren’t that bad. I figured you’d prefer it to anything you’d need hands for.”

Katsuki wasn’t willing to eat like an animal or let someone else feed him again... He could do a protein shake though. That wasn’t too bad. He didn’t say that much out loud, but when the straw was offered to him, he took it without a fuss.

Chalk and fake strawberry hit his tongue, causing his brow to furrow. Dabi hadn’t been lying, it wasn’t great, but it wasn’t awful. Katsuki had drunk far worse protein shakes in his life.

Once the shake was gone, Dabi lingered.

“I know the answer isn’t going to be ‘yes’, because, well, you’re fucking kidnapped and all that shit. But relatively speaking, you doin’ alright, Kid? Anything that’s gonna cause you to lose a limb or keel over?”

Briefly, Katsuki considered voicing his disgust over his current lack of hygiene options, but he thought better of it. Odds are he wouldn’t like any of the solutions they might attempt, and if he brought it up, they might not let it go.

“I’m fucking fine.” Then, after a moment of thought. “And don’t call me ‘Kid’, dickwad.”

It reminded him too much of Aizawa-sensei. A uncomfortably large number of things about Dabi did that, from their equally shitty slouchy posture to perpetually tired looking eyes.

Dabi snickered at him, but was willing to play along.

“What should I call you then? I’ve never been one for regular names. But I could try somethin’ new. Maybe ‘Kat’? Or ‘Kitten’ I guess, but that one feels fucking gross.”

Ew. Fuck no. Katsuki balked at both suggestions. He hated people comparing him to animals. It brought back too many memories of the flood of letters, newspaper headlines, and jeering comments from strangers he’d gotten after the sports festival shit. Animalistic. Wild. Untamed. Like he wasn’t a fucking human. Dabi must’ve picked up on his discomfort, because he switched gears.

“Alright, no animal nicknames, got you loud and clear. Hm. How about something to do with your quirk then? Firecracker seems pretty fitting. Or Hotshot. Oh, or what about Spitfire?”

“Fucking fine!” Katsuki was already sick of this game. “Pick whatever shitty nickname you want, I don’t give a fuck.”

“Spitfire it is then!”

Rolling his eyes, Katsuki pointedly dropped back down to the futon with his back to Dabi. He wiggled under the blankets as best he could without using his hands and braced himself to ignore the other for however long it took the other to get bored. Lucky him, that seemed to be the end of it. Dabi let him be, a contemplative silence resting between them.

Soon enough, Dabi had to leave. Stubbornly, Katsuki pretended not to notice as the other stood up and made his way out of the cell. Only to

be jolted when the other spoke.

“See you soon, Spitfire. With any luck, it won’t be down in this shithole.”

Then he was gone. Leaving Katsuki chew at his bottom lip as he tried to puzzle out what the fuck that meant. Beyond the obvious.

Shivering lightly, Katsuki curled himself under the blankets a little more. Idly he wondered if the cell got colder when Dabi left, or if it was just a trick of his stupid mind. Not like he could do much about it either way. He couldn’t do much about anything right now.

All he could do was wait and see. And be ready to fucking go if he got his chance.

Footsteps sounded down the hallway again, but these weren't the lazy, sauntering steps from before. Katsuki pulled himself up into a sitting position, shaking off the last dredges of his nap as he analyzed the new sound. These ones had more stride to them, more purpose. But they were lighter than Dabi's. Now that he was focusing, he could hear a second, far fainter set of footsteps alongside the first. Far too light to be anyone but that cloudfucker. Which meant-

"Oh, hey, you're up. Hell yeah. Wasn't sure if you'd already gone to bed, It's kinda early for that, but I know you don't have much else going on down here."

If looks could kill- Actually, fuck, hadn't he read an article last month about some poor kid who could shut down people's organs by glaring at them really hard? Another perfectly good idiom ruined by quirks.

Dammit.

Okay, unimportant. Back to the situation at hand.

If *Katsuki's* looks could kill, then the chapstick-phobic freak in front of him would've been dead ages ago.

"What the fuck do you want? I already told you I'm not interested in joining your shitty club."

The stupid hand on the asshole's face made it hard to read his expressions, but Katsuki could make out his nose wrinkling momentarily before he seemed to shrug off the hostility.

"Sorry, I know you're 'prolly grouchy about the set-up, but it was the only safe place to keep you 'till your gloves were ready."

Oh, he did *not* like the sound of that. Before he could protest or try to figure out what the fuck the Handfucker meant, the guy stepping forward into his cell with Foghead by his side. The other wasted no time in pulling Katsuki's arm restraints up and forwards. He was still talking but Katsuki's auditory processing shut off as a wave of panic overtook him. He could feel- fuck- something was on his hands. No matter how he tried to pull away, it was useless because that sensation followed him, and then-

The arms cuffs slid off, letting him stumble backwards. One little click and the horrid things were gone. In their place was a pair of gloves wrapped snugly around his hands. There was still a tingling sensation in his hands, but it wasn't quite as bad as before.

Katsuki stared blankly at the gloves for several seconds, unsure what to make of them. Or of any of this.

Shigaraki had the fucking audacity to grin at him, as if he were proud of whatever the fuck he'd put on Katsuki.

"There we go! Those are a lot nicer than the bulky restraints, huh? And they're not forever either, just until you get your quirk under control."

Speaking of his quirk, Katsuki tried to activate it. He knew it wasn't going to fucking work, but for the hell of it-.

Honestly, he expected the gloves to zap him or something. But nope. He could feel his muscles twitch in an attempt to spark off, but there was nothing for them to ignite. He couldn't force sweat from his palms. Like, at all.

It hit him that his palms were dry too. Like, completely dry. His hands were never completely dry.

"What the fuck?!"

It wasn't particularly elegant, but fuck being elegant, he fucking hated this and he was pissed off.

"Don't worry, your quirk isn't gone. Just turned off for a bit!"

The Mistfucker spoke up next, taking a step closer to the two of them.

"If I may?" Handsy nodded, so the guy continued, voice still obnoxiously formal. "The gloves Dr. Ujiko designed for you are quite simple. They run a gentle electric current across your palms to prevent you from sweating out any nitroglycerin. They also have voice activated electromagnets for emergency restraint if necessary. You will not be able to remove them unless an authorized league member allows you to, but you shouldn't need to in the near future."

Katsuki bristled, shoulders pulling up and lips curling back. He hated every fucking part of this, but he especially didn't like the sound of that voice activated bullshit. Before he could start in on cursing the two of them out, Misty was looking towards Handfucker, tilting his head slightly.

"Tomura Shigaraki, I believe you wanted to switch locations once the gloves were in place?"

"Yeah, no point in hangin' around here."

Black mist overtook them and Katsuki almost choked in shock, primal fear surged in him from too much time spent gagging on sludge-

And then they were in a room.

Katsuki's head whipped around, trying to figure out where the fuck he was.

It looked for all the world like a regular ass bedroom. For the most part. The walls were bare, but there was a clock set into one of them. Two doors, one of which looked heavy duty and the other appeared standard, though both were made of metal. The walls were metal too,

as was the floor. No windows. A twin bed with black sheets and blankets, a dresser, a desk and a bookshelf.

At the risk of sounding repetitive, What The Fuck?

Handsy straightened, still smiling that creepy fucking smile. “This is your new bedroom! Since you’re a member of the league now and stuff, you needed a room of your own to make it official. Not too much in here right now, didn’t really want to get you something you’d hate, plus a lotta the other basic stuff isn’t safe just yet. But we can fix that once you’ve settled in.”

Katsuki was too fucking lost to even open his mouth and begin responding to this bullshit, but the asshole just kept on trucking as if this was a perfectly normal conversation.

“For tonight you’ll need to stay in here. There’s a bathroom, left door, should have everything you need in there. The dresser has new clothing in it, figured you’d like looser stuff so I got everything a bit larger than your uniform size. Kurogiri’s gonna bring you dinner in a few hours, by then I’m sure you’ll be ready for bed. Big day and all that.”

Where the fuck had they gotten his uniform measurements from? It probably wasn’t the most important part of all of this, but it was still yet one more creepy fucking thing for him to deal with.

“Tomorrow your gloves’ll activate so you can use the main door. Ah, right, uh- the gloves work like a keycard, use the back and just tap it to the little square. If you’re allowed in the room, then it’ll let’cha in. Right now that’ll just be your room, the living rooms, and the dining room. But once you’ve gotten used to things we can increase your access. Don’t want to go too big too soon again.”



“Now, there’s a couple a’ rules you gotta follow, since you’re new to the league. The gloves hafta stay on ‘til you can control your quirk properly. No weapons for right now either. Can’t have you running off again, so no leaving the base unless you’re with someone. The rest is just obvious stuff; no attacking people, try not to break things. All that jazz.”

Crusty looked back towards Mistfucker, tilting his head like a puppy seeking approval.

“Am I forgetting anythin’?”

Mistfucker glanced towards Katsuki, obviously picking up on his baffled horror. After a beat, the asshole must’ve decided to ignore it because he shook his head.

“I don’t believe so, but I imagine this is all quite overwhelming for Bakugou. Why don’t we give him some time to adjust, and if he has any questions then I can answer them tonight?”

“Right, you’re right.” Shigaraki’s hand drifted up to dig into his neck as he glanced back towards Katsuki, who was still speechless, unsure of how to even begin to address this situation. He’d been expecting threats, torture, blackmail, brainwashing- Anything but this. Whatever the fuck this was.

This *had* to be a fucking prank. It had to be. Someone was going to yell surprise any minute now, right?

“See you in the morning, Katsuki.”

And then both villains were stepping out of the room, leaving Katsuki alone. In a bedroom. That was supposedly his.

Nobody jumped out and yelled 'gotcha'. The room didn't dissolve, and no matter how many times he pinched himself, Katsuki couldn't wake up from this fever dream.

After thirty-four minutes of trying to find evidence that this wasn't real, Katsuki was left with nothing. Everything indicated that this was, in fact, real and some-fucking-how, his life.

He curled up against the wall in the far corner of the room, face pressed into his hands and knees tucked to his chest tightly as he let out a heavy groan. An awful feeling was blooming in his chest that he was in for a long and frustrating experience. God fucking damn it.

Katsuki let himself hide in the corner for exactly ten minutes. The clock in the wall near the door let him time it down to the second.

For ten minutes, he let himself stay curled up in a miserable ball of self pity, confusion, and fear. He let himself whine in his head that it wasn't fair (it was, he deserved this), pretend people were on their way to save him (they weren't, he'd seen the damage caused by the first attempt, they weren't going to risk it again), and let himself lie and say this all made sense (it didn't, none of this made any fucking sense).

Ten minutes.

After his ten minutes were up, Katsuki took a deep breath in, let it out, and got the fuck back up to handle this shit.

He'd done this song and dance before. Maybe not this exactly, not whatever level of crazy was going on here, but he'd been kidnapped before. This was just a new twist on an age old story.

Kid has a strong quirk. Bad guys want it. Bad guys take kid. Kid breaks out. Rinse and repeat. Over and over and over again.

First things first, he felt fucking disgusting. He did a through sweep for cameras, but as best he could tell there weren't any. There weren't many places for them to hide cameras either. Except maybe in the clock, since it was embedded in the wall and inaccessible to him. It was facing away from the bathroom though, and didn't seem like it'd be at a good angle for a camera. Katsuki didn't exactly feel safe, but he felt reasonably comfortable that he wasn't being actively watched.

Clothing took him a minute of internal debate to decide upon. Half of him was tempted to just wash his current outfit in the shower and rewear it, but there were decent sized rips in the both his shirt and pants from his second fight with the villains. Until he could sew them up, he'd have to make do with whatever shit they'd left for him.

To his uncomfortable surprise, the clothing in the dresser was pretty damn close to his normal style. Mostly plain black, with a few white skull t-shirts.

All of it was fairly soft too, and he hated himself for how much that made some dumb childish part of him happy. Soft shit like clothing and blankets was a guilty pleasure of his. He rarely wore it because soft also usually meant absorbent which was just begging for issues with his quirk, but it felt good against his skin, particularly when he'd overused his quirk and every nerve was left hypersensitive. Still, it wasn't safe-

Huh. Actually, he didn't really need to worry about the absorbency right now, did he? Well, that was one problem solved. Just a million and three left to go.

Showering took damn near an hour. A solid layer of grime had accumulated on his skin, and it took multiple thorough scrubblings before he could begin to feel clean. He used it as a chance to take stock of his injuries. After nearly two days, not much was left. A few bruises and scrapes in the last stages of healing, but nothing major. Nothing real.

Once he was out of the shower, he took a moment to inspect himself in the mirror for anything he'd missed.

Physically, he looked fine. His hair was a mess, but it was clean now. The clothing covered almost all of the bruises and scrapes, and the new clothes lacked any tears or abnormalities, besides the fucking weirdass gloves.

It was his eyes that gave away how tired he was. Leading him to notice the slight slump to his shoulders. How he held his hands in front of himself awkwardly to try to avoid touching his skin with the gloves.

For just a moment, Katsuki peered at his reflection and he saw a tired 16 year old boy staring back at him, scared and alone. Again. He shook himself, tearing his gaze from the mirror in favor of searching for the toothbrush he'd seen earlier. If his hands were shaking as he snagged the brush and toothpaste, well, it was because of these stupid fucking gloves. Nothing else.

Fuck.

Scrubbing at his teeth vigorously, he refused to look back up at the mirror. He wasn't some pathetic teenager, he was Katsuki fucking Bakugou. He was a hero in training at UA, and he had a badass quirk. This was fucking nothing. All he needed was a good night's sleep and then he'd get the fuck out of here. Just like he always did. He had to. There was no other option.

Mistfucker didn't bother with the door, but at least he had the courtesy to teleport in beside it, rather than into the middle of the fucking room. Katsuki suppressed the urge to bolt upright when he saw the guy. Showing fear was for fucking cowards. He waited a beat, then pushed himself upwards, keeping a harsh glare locked onto the dickhead and his teeth bared.

His efforts to intimidate went completely ignored, as Mistfucker put down the plate of food he'd been carrying in his left hand on the desk before turning to take Katsuki in, looking him up and down with an expression that Katsuki couldn't make out. The fucker's emotions were a pain and half to decipher with his lack of normal facial features.

"I see you cleaned up, and it looks like the clothing fits. Good, Tomura was worried that it wouldn't. Did you find everything alright?"

"Everything but a fucking knife to cut your fucking throat."

Katsuki was tired, and he was going to be an asshole about this. It didn't help that the guy was completely unfazed by him, shaking his head with a light tut. As if he was used to this. Maybe he was.

"Well, that would be why you're not currently allowed any weaponry."

He paused then, yellow eyes taking on what Katsuki thought might be a contemplative look. For several more long seconds, he studied Katsuki in silence. When he spoke again, his voice was softer.

"A word to the wise; While I have no doubts that you'll have an... adjustment period, for all of this, I wouldn't attempt to remove those gloves with anything metal. The electric capacity is higher than you might assume."

"I'm not a fucking moron, I know how electricity works." Katsuki had already been planning to try to create a sharp wooden or plastic edge to cut the gloves off. He didn't need a fucking lecture on that shit. Again though, Mistfucker was unbothered by him. Probably used to worse temper tantrums working with Handsy.

"Of course." And then his voice took on a harder edge, one that made Katsuki drop his scowl at just how *serious* it was. "I would also caution you against injuring yourself too badly. Besides the obvious, any injuries that we are unable to treat with basic first aid would necessitate an appointment with Dr. Ujiko, which could have... unpleasant side effects. I'd personally advise avoiding it if you can."

The way he spoke implied there were things he wasn't saying, for one reason or another. But he sounded honest all the same, so Katsuki bit back his instinctive insulting reply. He watched the weird mist swirl softly off the man for a few moments before he found his voice.

"I already want to see as few of you fuckers as humanly possible."

Misthead nodded before he teleported back out, leaving Katsuki alone with his thoughts.

Dr. Ujiko.

The name wasn't familiar to Katsuki. He'd read up on the League of Villains, what little there was to read, after the USJ attack. No mention of a doctor had ever come up. Then again, no mention of All for One had come up either, so what the fuck did he know? There was no way the guy was just the group's healer though, that wouldn't necessitate a warning like that. Maybe he was more of a mad scientist then? Could have something to do with the League's foot soldiers, the Nomu.

Just the thought of those creepy fuckers made Katsuki shudder. God damn, he really, really did not want to think about that right now. The police reports he'd dug through said that they appeared to be made from missing people, and even though he was pretty sure that that wasn't going to happen to him *yet*, he couldn't rule it out as a possibility. Particularly if this Ujiko asshole had something to do with them, and was outside of Handsy's control as Mistfucker had implied.

It was all overwhelming to think about, so Katsuki filed the information away in his head. His brain was carefully organized into lists and boxes, all written down neatly and stacked up in order. Everything had a list and a box that it belonged to, and he kept it all there. It was the only way for him to keep all the things he needed to know straight. The name 'Dr. Ujiko' was put into the 'Potential Wildcards' list, which was then tucked into the 'League of Assholes' box, to be taken back out whenever Katsuki had the mental energy to deal with it.

Who knows, maybe he could get more information while he was stuck here. It wouldn't make it worth it, but at least it'd make him feel a little less pathetic for getting his ass captured not once, but fucking twice. There was no way he could make up for his fuck-ups, but that wouldn't stop him from trying.

Glancing over at the food on the desk, it looked like some sort of curry again. He wasn't hungry. For fuck's sake, he'd already eaten twice today, decent sized meals too, and he hadn't done shit.

All he really wanted was go to sleep. Maybe if he was lucky, he'd wake up back home and find out this really had been a nightmare after all.

Or maybe, if everyone else was lucky, he wouldn't wake up at all.

Katsuki took a deep breath and shoved that ugly voice to the back of his mind. Another deep breath to stand and flick out the lights, repressing a shudder as the darkness enclosed him. And one more as he fell back down onto the bed, only barely bothering to wiggle under the covers before he felt himself start to drift.

He wondered what nightmares he'd have tonight. Or if he'd have nightmares at all. Most nights he did, but he was pretty fucking tired. Even so, he had a feeling he'd be dealing with his demons all throughout the night too. He had a brand new set of fodder to work through after all. Better to get started on it sooner rather than later.

After all, Katsuki Bakugou was no fucking quitter. Even when it came to shitty dreams haunting him whenever he tried to rest. That's what he liked to tell himself anyways. It made him feel stronger, and who knows, maybe that strength would be enough to keep the monsters away long enough for him to sleep in peace.

## Chapter End Notes

Tomura: "You call it kidnapping, I call it a surprise adoption. Same thing."

Katsuki, incredibly confused and upset: "No they aren't!"

I hope everyone enjoyed this chapter, I'm excited to hear what people think of the story so far!



# I Hate This Fucking Family

## Chapter Notes

This took longer than I was planning on, but it also is longer than I was planning on.

Also, note that I am aware Hokkaido doesn't actually have a different timezone, but it *should* and this is 200 years in the future so I'm gonna say they sorted that out.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

No such luck. When his eyes reopened Katsuki had to fight down the surge of panic in his gut. Some of it was lingering fear from his nightmares, and the rest came from the steely gray ceiling above him. It took a few seconds for him to get his breathing under control, and then he turned his eyes to the clock.

7 am.

Red eyes narrowed, glaring at the clock as if it personally had wronged him. Which it had. It was lying to him. There was no fucking way it was 7 am. Katsuki always, *always*, woke up at 6 am sharp. No exceptions, short of being drugged out or otherwise forced into unconsciousness.

The last time he'd missed his normal wake up time had been after the sports festival, and that had only been due to a nasty mix of Midnight's fucking sleeping gas lingering in his system, and the loss of stamina from getting healed after they'd finally let him down from that shitty podium. Before that, his record had been holding strong for three and a half years of getting up at the correct goddamn time.

There were no more drugs in his system, he knew that much. Waking up out of a drug haze always felt different. The handful of times he'd woken up at the wrong time, he'd known it the moment his eyes open. He could feel the wrongness compared to his normal wake up time, and he hadn't felt that wrongness today. He'd woken up at the right fucking time.

So, if his body had woken up at the right time, then the only explanation for this was that time was wrong. Or, more accurately, the *timezone* was wrong. There was only one part of Japan that used UTC + 10, the only part of Japan that was in a different time zone at all;

Hokkaido.

Katsuki considered this new information. On one hand, it gave him a much better sense of where he was, which was good. On the other, being in Hokkaido did not bode well for his eventual escape.

Hokkaido had the lowest population density of any prefecture, and plenty of remote wilderness for unsavory people to hide out in. Given Katsuki's very rough estimates of the size of this place, the fact it was probably underground, and the league having a teleporter to get around, and it was almost certain that this base was in the middle of fucking nowhere.

Not only was he going to need to escape, but he was going to need to play fucking keep away in the woods until he managed to get to civilization again. Which could be days out on foot for all he knew.

Well, if nothing else, he was willing to bet he had more wilderness survival experience than any of these spoiled city fuckers. As long as they couldn't track him, and ideally with a bit of a head start, he'd manage. Wasn't like a trek through the woods was anything new to him. His legs were longer these days, and this place didn't seem to be surrounded by a fucking ocean, so Katsuki still considered it one of the nicer places he'd have to escape from.

Speaking of escaping, Katsuki took a minute to inspect the gloves more thoroughly now that he was awake. He could feel the bumps of various electronics under the outer layer, but all of them felt well cushioned and squishy. The gloves themselves fit like a second skin. They were clearly tailored for his hands and there was a stickiness to the inside of them, not unlike the electrode pads he'd had to wear at the doctor's office a few times. Thinner though. Which was fucking obnoxious since it meant he couldn't move the damn things a centimeter. No matter how he pinched or tugged, they refused to budge, bunch up, or pull away from his skin. The fit at his wrists was firm and flush with his skin. They must have an automatic adjustment system, since no matter how he flexed his hands there was no slack, yet his blood circulation wasn't cut off at any point.

Katsuki found himself disturbed by just how *comfortable* these stupid gloves were too. He hated them, of course he fucking did, but if he wasn't looking at them or thinking about them, it was easy to forget they were there. The only reminder was that ever present slight tingle of electricity.

Ugh. Well, it looked like he wasn't going to be getting this shit off any

time soon without something to cut them with. And there wasn't anything in this room that was gonna help him do that.

Pushing himself to his feet, Katsuki looked around the room one more time just in case. His eyes fell on to the curry from the night before. It was covered, so it was probably still fine. Since he didn't really have anything better to do he snagged it off the desk and took a bite of it. He wasn't particularly hungry, despite having not eaten since the day before, but he *was* curious.

While it would've tasted better 8 hours ago, Katsuki couldn't say it tasted bad now. In fact, it actually tasted decent. Mistfucker must know shit about cooking, which wasn't overly surprising. He had been behind the bar at their shitty hideout, which implied he knew something about food. What was surprising was it tasted decent to *Katsuki*. He was well aware he was an outlier in how spicy he liked his food (although if you asked him other people were just fuckin' weak). So the fact the curry was anywhere near his preferred level of heat was a surprise. And concerning.

Mostly concerning, actually, now that he was giving it some thought.

His uniform size was one thing, while it was kinda weird that they knew that, he could see them getting it from a handful of non-personal sources. His taste for spicy foods wasn't exactly a secret, but it sure as fuck wasn't public knowledge. Katsuki had no social media that they could've gotten that from, and it wouldn't have been in his school file. They would've had to have gotten it from someone who knew him. Or been watching him for a while. Either option carried a lot of upsetting implications.

Taking a deep breath, Katsuki found he didn't have any interest in eating anymore. He didn't particularly feel like leaving food around to rot either. Luckily, the curry wasn't particularly thick and getting rid of it wasn't a problem. Down the toilet went the rest of the uneaten food, then he washed the dish and set it on a hand towel to dry. Job done, he went back out into the bedroom and surveyed it for a moment.

Great. Now what?

Katsuki eyed the door. He'd assumed one of these fuckers would come by whenever he was allowed out. But they just said it'd unlock in the morning. Worth a shot, if only to get a leg up on searching for useful shit.

Before doing anything else, he inspected the door. Solid metal, sliding door, the seams all covered up. He wouldn't have much luck prying at it. If what the fuckers had said last night was true though...

Katsuki brought his wrist up to the side of the door, where there was a little outline of a square (reader must be buried in the wall, ugh, that was a pain), and sure enough, he got a little 'Beep!' as the door slid open for him.

So, this was all fucking real then.

Cautiously, Katsuki stepped out of his room, half expecting there to be a trap waiting outside, but the gray hallway looked as harmless as a hallway could, which was to say that it didn't hold any active threats, merely doorways that whispered of the potential of them.

The interior definitely supported his bunker theory, the hallway was all metal too. All the doors were that same sliding design, with the square outlines beside every door. From the looks of it, Katsuki was at the end of the hallway. There were three doorways on either side, and then all the way down the hallway another door, presumably the exit. Or the path towards it.

It was tempting to go straight for that, but Katsuki kept himself in check. There may not be security cameras in his room, but he knew they would have some out here. A creeping feeling was running down his spine, and the air felt too heavy for him to be fooled into thinking he was really alone. He didn't want to raise any alarms right off the bat. It was better to look like he was just exploring. Which, in all fairness, he was. For now.

Since the hallway itself was bare except for the doors, Katsuki decided to start his search on the two rooms closest to his room. There were no labels, and nothing to indicate which was one of the rooms he was "allowed" into, so he started with the one on the left and touched his gloved hand to the square.

Bzzz.

Nope. Not allowed in that room. Katsuki took a moment to test at what distance the readers could pick up his gloves. From what he could tell, it required him to actually touch the little square. Ugh. That was also going to be a pain.

Putting his frustration aside, Katsuki tried the other door adjacent to his room. Same result. The next door down on the right gave him that

ugly buzzing noise, but the matching door on the left was more promising. When his glove touched the reader, he got a successful beep, and the door slid open to reveal what looked for all the world like a normal ass living room.

Alright, not quite a normal living room. There was a couch, a TV, and a coffee table, but the place had no windows. The TV was set into the wall with that same stupid safety glass, and the coffee table was solid metal, all sharp edges were rounded out of it, and it was bolted into the damn floor. The couch was too.

It wasn't an entirely useless room though. Unlike his bed, he was 95% sure that the couch had springs in it. Which were possible weapons if he could get to them. He couldn't risk that just yet though. Not until he figured out when people woke up, and who might be watching him at any given time.

Already, he felt eyes on him. He'd paused to glance around more than once and seen nobody, but he could feel the weight of the gaze. The air in the room felt like the air in the hallway, hazy and unsettling in ways he couldn't describe but which made the hair on the back of his neck stand up. Little things that told him not to look too closely at anything or make a move too daring.

There was only one other door leading out of the living room space, and it was to the last room on the left. Katsuki tried his gloves, and it looked like he was allowed in here too. Another living room space. No TV in this one, just a bunch of armchairs and couches. Good for springs, not useful for much else. Still no windows. Definitely a bunker then. Shit.

Katsuki exited the chair room back to the hallway and glanced between the last door on the right side and the door at the end of the hallway. There were eyes on him for sure. Both doors were equally close to him, but... He felt like he could get away with trying the last door now. Even if he got caught, it wasn't too unreasonable for him to have been looking for the kitchen or something.

After scanning the area one more time, Katsuki tried his gloves at the door.

Bzzzt.

Well, he hadn't really been expecting much else, but he still found himself a little fucking disappointed. He tried a second time for good measure. Same result. Fuck him then. Just as he was about to turn to

try the last door in the hallway, a smooth voice spoke up behind him.

"My apologies, I wasn't aware you were such an early riser. I would've come to show you around if I'd known."

Katsuki whirled around, the hair on the back of his neck stood up as he took in Mistfucker. Those yellow eyes were too focused for his flat, casual tone. It was hard to not jump, to not look away in some sort of fucked up sense of guilt, but Katsuki held strong.

What the fuck had they been expecting? That Katsuki wasn't going to check out his surroundings? Even if he was actually on board with their shitty gang, which he absolutely wasn't, there was no way in hell he'd just sit around in his room like a little kid waiting for someone to tell them what to do.

"I've been finding shit just fine on my own, so you can fuck off."

Obviously the asshole wasn't going to listen, but cursing him out made Katsuki feel a little better about the whole situation. If nothing else, he was going to make everyone else as unhappy about him being here as humanly possible.

"As foul mouthed as ever I see." Like that was a fucking surprise. "Regardless, I know you aren't allowed access to the kitchen yet, and I'm sure you're hungry. Come along."

As he spoke, Mistfucker turned to the remaining door, raising his right arm to touch a small bracelet to the square, causing the door to slide open. Katsuki hesitated for only a heartbeat before he followed. Not because he was hungry, although he was a little bit now that he thought about it, but because he wanted to get a closer look at that bracelet.

Stealing Kurogiri's would be fucking stupid, but Katsuki knew he could probably take a number of the other fuckers in one on one combat, even without his quirk. Which meant he could probably get someone else's bracelet. He needed to be sure the bracelet would work for him first though, which meant he needed to figure out if there were any special tricks to them. If they had some sort of verification method that meant they only worked for one user, then that was going to be problematic.

Handsy didn't appear to wear one, at least not that he'd seen. Dabi definitely didn't have a bracelet on the last time Katsuki had seen him. They might've taken them off, but they might also have another way

of getting around. If there was some way to bypass the readers, that could also be his ticket out of here.

At the very least, the bracelets couldn't be triggered by pulse or temperature. Mistfucker had his attached to the edge of his sleeve, which made sense given that the rest of him was made of mist. But it also meant that there were only a few possible verification options left, if the bracelets had one at all.

Katsuki got so focused on trying to puzzle out what mechanism the locks used, he forgot to sass back at Mistfucker before the other made his way into the kitchen through the door on the other side of the dining room. By the time he found his voice again, the guy was already gone. Oh well.

In the meantime, Katsuki took a few minutes to inspect the dining room around him. It was relatively plain, a wooden table and wooden chairs with cushions in them. Still no windows, there was no chance they were above ground. The chairs and tables looked like they had screws in them, more possible weapons. Though he'd probably have a harder time stealing one without anyone noticing. A light shove told him that the table was bolted down, but the chairs were not. Which meant they were still viable weapons. Decent ones too. If he could get someone alone in here, hitting them with a chair could take 'em out fairly quickly. Or work to trap them for a minute.

Beyond that, the room was devoid of anything else of value. Which wasn't too surprising. They must've stripped the areas down of anything he could use to fight back. If he could get into the kitchen though, he was sure that they wouldn't have cleaned that out. It would have all sorts of valuable tools.

Unfortunately, now wasn't the right time to make any attempts at getting in there. The mist guy did have a weak point, he had to keep one part of him solid at all times, but without his quirk or a decent weapon Katsuki couldn't exploit that. Which meant the dickhead could just teleport him away if he tried anything.

Katsuki took a deep breath to settle himself, then dropped into one of the chairs at the dining table. One facing the kitchen, but not too close to the hallway door either. He didn't have much to do right now than wait and see how certain things panned out.

So wait he did, for about ten minutes, before Mistfucker came back at long last, a bowl of what looked like Miso soup in his right hand. He

smiled when he saw Katsuki sitting at the dining room table, and fuck if that didn't piss Katsuki right the fuck off.

All the sudden, he didn't feel like eating anymore.

"I heard you usually prefer things spicy, but I don't think it'd be good for your stomach if you jump right back into eating hot foods, so I made it a bit blander than you might normally prefer."

Oh fuck off, the curry last night had been plenty spicy. The asshole was just mocking him now. Katsuki was ready to open his mouth, to snarl and say there wasn't anything he couldn't handle, but the faint click of footsteps down the hallway stopped him.

Fuck, he didn't really want to pick a fight if there were going to be more people involved. And what Dabi said a day ago rang in his head. Turning down food wasn't a great plan. He could almost hear Aizawa's voice in his head, lecturing him to put aside his pride and think logically about things for once.

The bowl was placed in front of him, and Katsuki inspected it. Nothing stood out to him as obviously wrong, but-

But Mistfucker hadn't made any for himself.

That was a red flag if ever Katsuki had seen one. And he'd seen a whole lot of fucking red flags in his life. Fuck, he was practically a walking one by this point.

He shifted in his seat, tensing up his legs, just in case.

"I'm not fucking hungry."

Yellow eyes flashed with something, anger? Disapproval?

"You really should eat. It's not healthy for you to be skipping meals, particularly not at your age."

"Oh yeah, because clearly the biggest threat to my fucking health right now is not eating some shitty soup. I'm pretty fucking sure if I asked literally anyone with half a brain cell, they'd be able to tell me being surrounded by a bunch of villains is the bigger fucking problem here."

Mistfucker seemed to tense, posture going even more rigid than it was before and eyes narrowing. Definitely disapproval. Before he could reply, the two of them were interrupted by the door behind them



sliding open.

Anyone other than Handsy, that was all Katsuki wanted. Katsuki could deal with literally anyone else right now, but not him. Maybe the clone guy? He'd listened last time so he might listen again.

Not quite, instead in strode Dabi, looking for all the world as casual as could be. He paused when he saw who was present, gaze flickering to the food in front of Katsuki, then up to Mistfucker, blue eyes narrowing for a heartbeat. The movement was so quick that Katsuki almost missed it, but he was sure he saw suspicion in Dabi's expression. He didn't trust Mistfucker, and that meant Katsuki definitely couldn't either.

Pushing himself up, Katsuki took a step back from the table, holding back a flinch as the first villain took a step towards him. The expression on his face was unreadable, what with it being made of fucking mist and all, but it didn't matter. Katsuki didn't fucking trust him, and nothing was changing his mind any time soon.

"I hate to insist, but I doubt Tomura would be happy if he found out you weren't eating."

Opening his mouth to snap back, Katsuki was cut off when Dabi piped up, skirting around the two of them with care.

"Eh, lay off. If he doesn't feel like eating, no sense in forcing it. Let him get up and moving for a bit, and once he starts burning calories again he'll get hungry." Dabi made his way over to the kitchen as he spoke, tone lazy and posture loose, but a sense of purpose in every movement.

"I'll grab him something to drink now. As long as he's got fluids in him then he'll be fine."

The man raised up his hand to the door's reader. Katsuki was distracted for a moment trying to figure out where the other kept his key, only- There was nothing there. It looked like Dabi straight up tapped his flesh, some of the scar tissue no less, to the door.

Well, the guy was burnt to kingdom come and he had more piercing than Katsuki thought one person could fit on their body. It really shouldn't come as a surprise that he'd decided to get his key implanted under his fucking skin. Gross. God, Katsuki hoped he was the only one that did that. If it came down to it, he was willing to knock someone out and yank them around to open doors, but it would be a fucking

pain.

Regardless, Katsuki wasn't gonna complain too much since the guy had given him an excuse to not eat the shitty soup. Mistfucker looked like he wanted to argue about it further, but he had to wait until Dabi reappeared a minute later with a water bottle to do so. Plastic. Damn, if it had been glass then he could've used it as a weapon. Oh well, he was actually kinda thirsty so he took it all the same.

If only to piss off Mistfucker, Katsuki took the water bottle when Dabi offered it to him, jerking his chin downwards in a half-hearted thanks. Dabi gave him a lazy grin in reply, but blue eyes darted meaningfully to the doorway. A not so subtle hint that he ought to take his leave. Mistfucker spoke up again before he could, eyes narrowed down to yellow slits.

"While your input is appreciated, Dabi. I still believe it would be better for Bakugou to eat. Twice reported that he already refused a meal once, and it's unwise to allow that pattern to continue."

It was infuriating how quickly he'd been left out of the conversation. Overlooked, as if he didn't get any fucking say in this. Which, alright, he was aware by now that this asshole didn't care about his opinion and would probably force the food on him, but that didn't mean Katsuki wasn't going to fight tooth and nail against it. It didn't mean that they could just leave him out of it. Dabi's posture stayed lax as ever as he strode past Kurogiri, ignoring this glare.

"Chill out, he's eaten what, three times since then? And that time was 'cause he was still feeling the effects of the drugs. This time it's because he's been locked up for ages. Give him a bit."

Dabi reached up to tap his wrist to the reader, the dining room door sliding open for him as his eyes settled on Katsuki. Calculating, studying, but at the very least acknowledging his presence, unlike Mistfucker, who was now glaring at Dabi outright.

"Tell you what, I'll make sure he eats lunch. That'll be in just a few hours, so it won't make a difference, right? I'll handle the whole thing too, so you don't have to worry about playing babysitter, 'Kay?"

"I don't need a fucking babysitter at all, asshole."

Katsuki's words were growled, but all the same, he followed Dabi out of the room, not wanting to stay near Mistfucker any longer than he had to. He could feel those angry yellow eyes following the two of

them out, and didn't even think about where they were going until Dabi turned to open the door to the chair room. Walking this close to him, Katsuki could tell for sure that the other didn't have any bracelet or band on. It had to be under his scarred up skin then.

Egh.

Why was he following Dabi again? Katsuki was half tempted to just retreat back to his room and see how long he could get away with hiding there until he was forced out for something. But... he wanted answers. And since somehow Dabi was relatively grounded in reality compared to most of these other fuckers, he was probably Katsuki's best bet.

Speaking of which, the guy flopped down on the couch. He pulled a second bottle from his jacket, one that looked like it was filled with that same protein shake shit he'd given Katsuki yesterday.

After a moment of debate, Katsuki sat his ass down in the armchair in the far corner of the room, somewhat facing Dabi, but also far enough away from both him and the door that Katsuki would have a few seconds to react if anything happened. It also meant Mistfucker couldn't teleport behind him or some shit like that.

Blue eyes drifted up to meet red as Dabi started drinking his shake, one eyebrow raised in challenge. Katsuki took the damn bait, since he really had nothing to lose here.

"Okay, what the *fuck*?"

Once again, the fucker just laughed at him. A raspy sound, accompanied by a smirk splitting his face that looked painful.

"Fair enough. But hey, I did tell ya' the boss wasn't interested in hurtin' you."

"Well yeah! There's a huge fucking difference between not fucking hurting me and whatever this shit is. I don't even have a word for this! I told him I wasn't interested in his shitty goddamn league and so his plan is to what- just make me a member anyways? He can't just fucking do that! That's not how anything works!"

"Funny, I actually said the same thing when he explained his grand plan. But he's very sure of himself. Guy's got some screws loose up there, in case you haven't noticed. All of us do, it's sorta a requirement for ending up here."

"Handsy doesn't have some fucking screws loose, he's a half finished piece of Ikea furniture that's missing all the parts meant to hold shit together, so some dickwad got the bright idea to try to glue it, and when that didn't work they just fucking gave up and left it like that! There's no screws even remotely involved in that middle finger to functional furniture! Not even the fucking concept of them!"

That got him another laugh, and Katsuki definitely wasn't willing to relax, but he did feel a bit better. He'd gotten to let off some steam if nothing else.

"That's one way of putting it. Probably better than the alternative though, huh?"

Was it really? Katsuki knew he should probably be fucking grateful for not being tortured or whatever, but at least torture was easy to fucking understand. This was just pure bullshit.

It felt like starting at UA all over again. Except a million times worse, because at least when the idiots at UA were bothering him, he could fucking leave or use his quirk to make them back the fuck off.

But he shouldn't say any of that out loud. He knew he was fucking lucky that apparently Handsy was just the right brand of nuts that he'd convinced himself he was going to win Katsuki over with this bullshit.

"None of this shit is going to make me become a villain. I'm not playing along with this fuckery."

"Preaching to the choir over here, I've got no doubts that this isn't gonna do jackshit besides piss you off. I figure it'll at least be fucking entertaining. Watching the boss get all worked up when his dumbass plan doesn't work out is practically as good as reality TV."

Ah. There it was. The motive. Katsuki could live with Dabi using him to piss Handsy off. It wasn't like his own goals were that different. Since he didn't feel like arguing the point any further, he let the conversation die off, choosing to open up the water bottle instead. A quick look at the water plus a sniff test didn't show any signs of tampering. That was enough for Katsuki to take a sip, pacing himself as he thought through his current situation.

The clock in the wall said it was almost seven thirty now. A thought struck him as he glanced back to Dabi, who seemed lost in his own head.

"What the hell are you even doing up? There's no way you're a fucking morning person."

Back to smirking. God. Dabi's smirks weren't like other people's smirks. His looked like it was the only expression he could make with his face. Maybe it was. The staples and amount of scar tissue had to cause him some serious issues.

"Haven't you ever heard that you shouldn't judge a book by its cover?" He held the smug expression for maybe two seconds under Katsuki's glare before breaking, rolling his eyes.

"I'm less of a morning person and more of a 'not-sleeping-at-all' person. Odds are I'll be up at any given hour. Rest of the league varies, but Toga's an early riser too. I'm sure she'll be around soon enough."

"What about Handsy?" It took Dabi a moment to register the nickname and he snorted before replying.

"I'll have to steal that one. He's a night owl for sure. I don't think I've ever seen him up before 10 am. Odds are he'll show up around 11 or so. Everyone else is usually up before him. Dunno how many of them will come by to say hello."

Okay, Katsuki could work with that. So the early morning hours were probably his best bet for an escape. All he'd have to contend with was Mistfucker and Dabi. Depending on how he played his cards, maybe the yandere chick as well. Although, if he managed to keep things at least semi-non hostile between them, Dabi might not be such a big obstacle given time. Despite having been the one to grab Katsuki in the first place, and despite the warm fingertips Katsuki could still feel lingering on the back of his neck, it seemed that the flame villain wasn't particularly invested in keeping him here. Certainly didn't seem to have any issue with giving Katsuki potentially valuable information, that was for sure.

He nursed at the water bottle as he turned all this over in his head, time slipping by the two of them as Katsuki started to make plans. Ten or so minutes after their conversation, Dabi's prediction came true, and in bounded Ms. Stabby herself, looking bright and cheerful as ever. God, it was too fucking early for this.

Katsuki had already started dividing the league up into three categories; happy crazy, self-aware crazy, and bad crazy. So far, he felt comfortable putting Stabby and clone guy in the happy crazy bin. Dabi was probably in the self-aware crazy group. The others would

remain to be seen. Happy crazy he could put up with.

"Morning, Kacchan~"

Or maybe not.

Katsuki took a deep breath in and let it out. It was just like dealing with Deku these days. Don't let her get to you. It wasn't worth it.

Gritting his teeth, he merely glared at her in response, something that did absolutely nothing to dampen her mood. If anything, the attention only seemed to encourage her as she bounced across the living room, hopping up onto the free side of the couch and leaning over the armrest so she was only a foot or two away from Katsuki.

If nothing else, at the very least she didn't have a fucking knife out. He wasn't dumb enough to think that couldn't change any second though.

"Shigaraki told us all about you! I'm so happy that you ended up joining us after all! It would've been kinda lame to have gone through all that trouble to invite you and have it go to waste."

Alright, and there was the fucking line in the sand Katsuki wasn't willing to cross.

"I did not fucking join you assholes, I'm only here because I haven't had the chance to kill all of you and get the fuck out of here yet, but mark my fucking words, it's just a matter of time."

Ms. Stabby only giggled at him, delighted by his hostility rather than put off by it. Fucking obnoxious crazy asshole.

"He said you might be a bit confused at first, it's okay though! We all need time to adjust to new people and to get used to new situations. If you need any help, I'm always happy to talk! I'm good with people, really good. I just love 'em so much you know?"

Her face was getting a bit dreamy, and she leaned in closer, lips parted and allowing her fucking fangs to peak out. Katsuki bared his own teeth in response, about to growl at her to back the fuck off, even as he became more and more aware of how little ability he might have to stop her if it came down to a fight. Fuck- Handsy had said something about voice activation on the restraints, what the fuck did that mean again? Could any of them use it, or was it just him? Katsuki didn't know, and he hated not knowing shit like that.

"Oi, Toga, back off. Remember what the boss said?"

Dabi was looking down at his phone, uninterested in what they were doing, but still paying enough attention to call Ms. Stabby out apparently. She almost jerked back, flashing useless puppy dog eyes at both of them.

"Aw, I wasn't gonna actually do it! I know I'm not supposed to take blood from you guys unless you say it's okay. He just smells sweet! Like, extra sweet." Her wide eyes turned back to him, mood bouncing right back up. "Is that the soap you use? It doesn't smell like soap. It smells like it's coming from under your skin."

Huh. Katsuki narrowed his eyes at that. Right, his nitroglycerin supposedly had a sweet scent to it. Personally, Katsuki didn't smell it. Or he was just so used to the smell that his brain filtered it out. It would make sense that she could pick up on it though, what with her whole vampire thing she had going on. Dabi also seemed interested in that little tidbit, glancing up for just long enough to take a long look at the chick before he returned to his loose, uncaring posture.

"I didn't say you were gonna, but personal space is still a fucking thing. Doesn't matter what he smells like, you gotta lay off."

She wasn't happy about it, but she sat back on the couch all the same, folding her arms and dropping her head onto the armrest to stare at him. It was uncomfortable, but less so than having her leering over him, so Katsuki would fucking take it.

"Shigaraki said we were supposed to get to know you, so, tell me about yourself! I know you like fighting, and you don't like Izuku-chan even though you grew up with him. What else though? Do you have any hobbies?"

Oh hell no, he was not engaging with this shit.

"I like beating the shit out of villains and that's fucking it."

"Well that's boring. Ooo, what about dating? You've got so many pretty people in your class, you got a crush on any of them? Or maybe a secret girlfriend?" She must've seen the crinkle of his forehead. It was scary how quickly she picked up on tiny cues. "Secret boyfriend then? Or secret partner?"

"No, fuck off. I don't have time for that shit."

"You really are a busy bee, huh? Okay, well then what else do you do? I can share something first if that helps! I really like going online to read about people, oh and I like doing my hair so it's nice and pretty! Do you do anything with your hair besides just letting it spike up everywhere?"

Oh god. Maybe this actually was torture. It was just really fucking clever. Katsuki ground his teeth together, closing his eyes and counting to ten in order to stop himself from just attacking the girl.

"I'm not telling you shit."

"Alright, you don't want to talk about yourself! That's okay, I get that. Dabi's the same way, he never tells us anything about himself. What about your classmates though? You're quite close to Izuku, aren't you? Our intel said the two of you grew up together, you were best friends, right?."

Katsuki couldn't mask his instinctive confusion and disgust. He almost refused to dignify that bullshit with a response, but his need to correct her won out.

"We weren't fucking best friends. He just followed me around a lot. I'm not telling you anything else."

There was something too seeing about Toga's eyes. They reminded him of Deku's, how they analyzed, searching hungrily for every scrap of information in his posture, in his breathing, in anything little move he might make. She picked up on his anger easily enough, her head tilting to the side.

"Guess that's a bit of a sore spot, huh?" And her face was downright sympathetic. Was this really the same girl who'd been pouncing on his classmates with a knife a few days ago? Like this, in a calmer environment... she seemed almost human. He wasn't sure if that was a good thing or not. It was unsettling to say the least.

"Alright, no talking about yourself, no talking about your classmates, you don't want to talk about any hobbies. I don't think we'd really share any- oh, unless-" Her face perked right back up, leaning in a little closer. "You liked hiking, right? You like to go mountain climbing and backpacking?"

"I already told you I'm not telling you shit about me."

Ms. Stabby took that as an affirmative, smile only growing brighter.



"Maybe we do have something in common after all then! I'm not one for camping, but I do like knives. If you're really into outdoorsy stuff, does that mean you like knives too?"

Honestly, he should've expected the conversation to end up here, and yet he was still taken off guard. Katsuki had to watch the teenager across him for a second as he sized her up. While he didn't want to give anything away, talking about knives seemed (somehow) like a relatively safe topic. Which would hopefully be enough to get her to go the fuck away.

"...They're fucking useful, yeah."

Like a mouse given a cookie, her eyes lit up with delight and he swore he saw her wiggle.

"I knew we had to have something in common! What are your preferences? Personally, I love leaf and needle blades on fixed knives, or trailing points if I won't be throwing it. I mean, I'm not too picky overall. I lose knives often enough that I've learned to work with pretty much anything sharp. But still, it's more fun when you've got a good one."

Huh. He hadn't really expected her to actually know shit about knives outside of how to stab people with them. Again, a poor assumption on his part more than anything else. It was rare he talked to anyone else who shared any of his interests, and he wasn't sure he'd ever talked in depth about knives with anyone outside of the internet.

"Drop point or sheepsfoot blades are my go-tos, but fucking obviously it'll depend on what I'm doing. Z-FiNit steel for any outdoor knives. That shit stands up better than anything else I've used, and I need my knives to fucking keep up with me. Never really liked fixed knives. I prefer a good folding knife. Easier to hide on myself, easier to carry while hiking, not to mention less of a chance of some moron stabbing themselves with it."

"What about aesthetics? You all about the practicality, or do you have any fun ones in your collection?"

While he knew shutting up and saying nothing was the smart choice here, was the smart choice regarding this entire situation, Katsuki couldn't help how he leaned in ever so slightly. He was engaged in the conversation now, no matter how much he wished he wasn't.

"Mostly practicality. I've got a few bone knives tucked away, made all

of them myself. Only *really* used one once, since I didn't have any alternatives and I wasn't a huge fan. Shit did the trick, but it wasn't sturdy enough. I don't like having to hold myself back because my tool isn't strong enough. Felt fucking badass while I was using it though."

"I *know*," She whined, flopping down onto the armrest. "Like a million times now I've thought about getting my hands on a pretty wave-bladed knife or two, they just look so nice, and it would look *so good*. But they just don't work well for real fighting. At least not how I fight."

Yeah, okay, fuck it. Katsuki was into this. It wasn't like he really had anything better to be doing. Not with two of them here and Mistfucker probably still skulking around. The two of them discussed their favored knives for a variety of situations, debated the use of a knife versus a sword, and even ended up swapping a few tips. Nothing combat related. Katsuki wasn't fucking dumb, he wasn't going to help a fucking villain hurt people.

However, he was willing to share some tips for keeping her knives clean. Which, really, was good for everyone, relatively speaking anyways. Sure, she was going to use her freshly cleaned knives to stab people, but from what Katsuki had gathered, she was less prone to complete kills and far more likely to leave someone stabbed but alive. As such, the cleaner the knives were, the less the chance of infection. For her or for anyone stabbed by her. So it was a good thing. Probably.

Regardless, the two of them were immersed in their conversation for what only felt like ten or twenty minutes, but which encompassed a full forty minutes according to the clock on the wall when Katsuki looked up.

The amount of time passed didn't bother him that much, what bothered him far more was what had caused him to look up in the first place. Namely, the swish of the door opening and subsequent entrance of Mr. Marbles. The stupid mask on his face made his emotions hard to read, but he didn't give any sign of being surprised at Katsuki's presence in the room. Odds are he'd gotten some kind of heads up. It made Katsuki wonder if Mistfucker had told him, or if they were keeping tabs on his location somewhere else. Dabi had been on his phone this entire time.

Masky gave a nod of acknowledgement towards Katsuki and Toga,

though whether the nod was meant for both of them or just one or the other, Katsuki couldn't tell. Didn't really matter, since Masky was then turning to exchange words with Dabi. Quiet words that Katsuki couldn't make out. Could've been about anything, but the brief half tilt of Masky's head towards him gave him a strong inkling that he was the subject of whatever the fuck they were discussing. Gritting his teeth, Katsuki pointedly tried to turn back to his conversation with Toga, but his heart wasn't in it anymore. His muscles were too tense, having been abruptly reminded of the situation he was in, and who exactly had gotten him into it.

For what it was worth, Toga picked up on the change in his mood. She tried to distract him again, but even after Masky left, it wasn't enough. There was no distracting himself from the fact he was currently a fucking prisoner. Not so soon after a reminder like that.

Despite his stilted replies, she kept it up without getting angry or upset with him for ages. It was nice of her to try, in this fucked up place where he regularly had to reconsider what the word 'nice' meant to him. Katsuki half heartedly responded to her attempts to engage him for a bit, until the door slid open again.

The woman who walked through the door- fuck, she did stuff with magnets, right?- didn't make a beeline for Dabi like Masky had. She surveyed the room, honing in on Toga and Katsuki in a heartbeat. Fuck. Toga perked up and waved at her, obviously excited to see one of her friends awake.

"Morning Magne! I was just talking to Kat about some of the weirder metals used for knives! You might actually know something about it too. I know you're not big into knives, but you know a lot about metal, right?"

It was an obvious invitation to their conversation, one that was taken gracefully as Magne crossed the room to settle in the armchair on the other side of Katsuki. The moment she moved, the moment she sat down, Katsuki felt himself locking up. He was trapped. His body was screaming at him that he needed to escape. Fuck, why had he let his guard down?

In reflection, the whole thing was fucking dumb. He'd been trapped the entire time, had been since he got here. But being physically cornered triggered his instincts to kick into high fucking gear. All the sudden the reality of his situation came crashing back into him at full force, and Katsuki lacked the rationality to calm himself down. There

was nothing he could tell himself that wasn't a lie. He was trapped, these people could- might kill him. All of them were dangerous. The panic got stronger, gripped his chest and stole his air.

Magne said something, a greeting maybe? All Katsuki could hear was his blood pounding in his ears. His palms itched, begging him to let out an explosion in warning, but he *couldn't*, and fuck, that only made him feel more trapped. Even more helpless, even though he knew that he wasn't. He could still fight!

*Not against this many people.*

Fuck this. Katsuki stood without warning, growling out something that may or may not have been actual words, but that he hoped communicated he was done being around people. Then he strode away, pressing his glove to the door's reader, an action that made the panic bubbling up inside of him so much worse. There was a beat between him pressing his wrist to the reader, and the successful beep. That pause served to remind him that he could only leave because they let him. They could trap him in this room, if they felt so inclined, and Katsuki hated being trapped. He hated this. He hated them.

Breathing picking up, Katsuki quickly retreated back to 'his' room. It wasn't exactly comforting, he was still trapped. They could come in here if they felt like it. They could do so much if they felt like it. But at least in here his instincts weren't screaming at him. In here, that primal part of him that so often kept him alive was quieter. Satisfied by the metal in between him and them, however useless it might be in practice.

It took him a while to get control over himself again. Panic wasn't going to help him. Panicking never helped him. It only made it worse. He was better than this. He was better than letting his fear control him. Most of the time.

Eventually, Katsuki got himself back into his iron tight grip, forcing his every action to be deliberate. Every breath slow, and every beat of his heart steady. He was calm. Or close to it at any rate. Not calm enough to feel safe leaving the room, but enough that he could think clearly again. While he needed more information, there would be time to get that when fewer people were around.

He could work on figuring out their schedules later. He already had a fair amount of information from this morning, at least assuming none

of them had gotten up earlier or later than they usually did. Dabi, Mistfucker and maybe Toga were all early risers, while Marbles and Magne were mid-morning people, clone guy was up in the air, Katsuki was willing to bet that he didn't get up at a set time. Handsy slept in apparently, and Katsuki had a feeling that the lizard did too.

The next thing he'd need to figure out is when these fuckers left. They almost certainly didn't have set work schedules, they were villains after all, but they would have to leave at some point to do... villain things.

That thought made Katsuki pause. He racked his brain and tried to recall what the League of Villains actually *did*. Beyond fucking with his class and releasing Nomu to harass people every so often. Sure, destruction was pretty normal for any villain, but they had to be doing more than that, right? Any organization like this needed funding, and that had to come from somewhere. The league didn't rob banks or sell drugs as far as he could tell.

It was worth investigating. It was also worth trying to figure out what Handsy's actual endgame was here. The guy claimed to be in it for destruction, but his actions didn't line up with that goal. His whole recruitment speech had been based around vague ideas of freedom and being unrestrained or whatever, but so far the only thing Handsy seemed to use his own freedom for was harassing a group of high schoolers. And maybe pissing off Stain?

Idly, Katsuki wondered if Handsy knew what his own endgame was. Fifty-fifty chance he had thought that far ahead. Maybe less. Given this whole fucking situation, Katsuki could safely say the guy was crazy, and Katsuki wouldn't put it past the fucker to be doing this shit for no reason at all.

Or maybe not, *no* reason, but a really stupid reason. Like not having anything better to do with his time.

Speaking of stupid reasons, the clone guy had mentioned Handsy's Sensei- All for One? The weird guy in the mask who All-Might had fought, who'd distracted Katsuki on the battlefield. What was that guy's deal? Was he Handsy's father or something? They certainly had seemed on good terms, but given that from Katsuki's hazy memories clone guy had dubbed the situation 'fucking weird' that implied something else was going on

Another thing on his list to puzzle out later. For now, he best bet

would be collecting any information he could on the league's goal and financing. The latter part in as much detail as possible. If- *When* he managed to get out of here, that would be the most valuable shit for the heroes. If they could cut off the league's resources, then bringing it down would be infinitely easier.

He would need to be careful about it though. He didn't want to push too far and end up dead. That wouldn't help anyone, no matter what the nasty voice in the back of his mind said.

Now if only he knew what too far was. So far he'd already tried to kick Tomura's ass once with no luck. Not to mention he'd gotten the guy's Sensei jailed. What could he do that would cross the line to wake Shigaraki up from his insane fantasy world? Would it just take one more attempt, or would Katsuki be able to spend every waking second fighting back and still have the guy act like they were friends?

It was a question he wasn't sure he really wanted answered. He also wasn't sure which answer he preferred. Like, obviously staying alive was a strong preference of his, but he did *not* want to be stuck with a villain tailing after him the rest of his life. That would be fucking annoying in a million different ways. Not to mention fucking dangerous to anyone who hung around him.

His mind flashed to Deku, arms hanging limply at his sides, but trying to force his body forward.

Katsuki had told him to stay back. The asshole hadn't listened. Even as the portal had been closing, Katsuki had watched Deku struggle forward towards him.

Deku never listened to him.

Honestly though, at this point Katsuki was just fucking happy that someone must've held him back or talked some sense into him, because Deku hadn't shown up at the damn kidnapping scene like Katsuki had half expected him to.

Or maybe he'd still been recovering from having two fucking broken arms. That was an equally likely possibility now that Katsuki considered it. Probably that one.

In any case, Katsuki was just hoping he'd manage to get his ass out of here before Deku showed up pulling some stupid suicidal shit. He needed to work quickly if he wanted to avoid that bullshit.

Deep breath in, hold it for a few seconds, then out again. Refocus on the task at hand. He banished any thoughts of *Deku* to the back of his mind, they weren't fucking helping. What he needed to do was get himself out of here. To do that, he needed to figure out when the best time to get his hands on someone else's key was. Also, who actually had a key that he could steal that wasn't buried under their fucking skin.

Katsuki lay in his bed for what felt like ages, but according to the clock was only 3 hours.

Honestly though, Katsuki had already established that the clock was a fucking liar, so how could he possibly trust it's judgement now? Maybe it really had been ten thousand years since he'd stormed off. That clock sure didn't fucking know. It didn't even know what time Katsuki *actually* woke up in the morning.

Petty thoughts about the passage of time and inanimate objects lying to him were amusing, but Katsuki did have more pressing matters to consider. Like the knock at his door, which had pulled him from his thoughts in the first place. He wasn't sure if he should answer. He couldn't place who'd knocked, the Mistfucker wouldn't have bothered, and Handsy didn't seem like the sort to knock at all.

Since he didn't know how anyone else in this shitty group knocked, he couldn't place it. Which made answering risky, if he couldn't tell who it was.

*You don't know them yet.*

And he wouldn't fucking ever. He wasn't sticking around long enough to memorize that crap. This shit would take a few days, max.

*You don't know that.*

Of course he fucking did. That was a bad, traitorous thought and Katsuki wanted to evict whatever moronic voice had spoken it from his brain immediately. Unfortunately, he was distracted from his task by the knock sounding again, this time with a voice he could easily place.

"Heya kiddo, I'd rather not barge in on you if you're sleeping, but I do gotta bring you food."

Magne. Hm.

Well, she decidedly wasn't the lowest on Katsuki's shit list. And it was strangely polite of her to knock. Plus, Katsuki was fairly sure if he didn't let her in or accept the food then the Mistfucker would have something to say about it. He didn't want that.

"Fuck off!"

That wasn't the smart choice, and it wasn't exactly what he meant to say either, but rage was still simmering under his skin and his impulsive response got the better of him. Was it rage under his skin still? It wasn't fear. Katsuki Bakugou did not do fear, or anxiety, or whatever the fuck other people like to call it. But it didn't feel quite like anger either. His anger ran hotter than this. This- hm. Discomfort? Distaste? A general sense of the universe doing it's very best to fuck him over every single fucking chance it got no matter what he tried?

That seemed about right.

"I'm going to open the door now."

It was a statement, not a question. Katsuki didn't bother replying this time. It wasn't worth arguing. Wasn't like he could stop her. Or, he could, but it wouldn't be worth the effort. He had better targets for his rage.

A second later, Magne opened up his door. Katsuki heard the beep and saw a bracelet not dissimilar to Mistfucker's. She had access to his room then. Fuck. That implied that all of the league members did- or at least, all of these guys. Magne didn't seem to be among the higher ranked individuals, but Katsuki also didn't know that much about their rank system besides a general sense of Handsy being their commander, probably the full on leader now that his fucking 'Sensei' was gone, and Mistfucker being something between a right hand man and an advisor for Handsy.

Magne watched him closely as Katsuki ignored her in favor of his own thoughts. He considered rolling over on his bed so his back was towards her, just to drive the point home, but that felt too much like what a fucking six year old would do.

His mind drifted back to thoughts of the league's power structure. Handsy and Mistfucker both had definitely been doing this longer. Then there was the doctor guy who'd been mentioned. He came off like more of an ally than someone actually under Handsy's command. Not hired help, hired help wouldn't warrant a warning like that. Worth investigating if he got the chance.



After what must've been a minute or two, Magne spoke at last, setting down a covered bowl as she did so.

"Well, I guess you aren't really in a chatty mood. Can't blame you for that."

That almost got Katsuki to huff a laugh, but he held himself back. No reaction. No emotion. No response. It wasn't worth it. She kept talking anyways, not put off by his lack of reply.

"Sorry about earlier, I've been told I can come on kinda strong. Adjusting to a new environment and so many new people can be a lot, and I get that. I wasn't tryin' to spook you, but I still shoulda' had some common sense and not boxed you in like that."

Katsuki could count the number of times he'd been apologized to (*actually* apologized to) by an adult on one hand. And now one of those times was by one of his fucking kidnappers. For 'spooking him'. But not the kidnapping thing.

For fuck's sake.

He twisted his face up into an annoyed grimace. Even if the apology did soothe the boiling feeling under his skin, he didn't want to let that show. None of these fuckers were anything but his enemies, and he had no goddamn reason to care about his enemies' apologies. Empty words, designed to lure him in with false promises. He was no fool. They couldn't trick Katsuki with that shit.

"Anyways, apparently Dabi told Kurogiri that he'd be sure you ate something. He had to go through, had some stuff to do, so Compress made some curry earlier and asked me to bring it over. It's actually decent. Compress ain't a half bad cook when he puts his mind to it. Hell of a lot better than anything I could put together."

The important part of that statement, at least to Katsuki, was that it wasn't Mistfucker who'd made the food. Not that the Mask guy was much better, but at the very least Katsuki was decently sure that guy wasn't going to try to... Poison him? Maybe? He didn't know what the fuck Mistfucker had been trying to accomplish this morning. There was really no logic behind trying to slip something into his food, not when the guy could almost certainly just force him to take whatever drugs he felt like. But something had to have been going on.

Then again, he didn't know why he was even fucking here in the first place. Beyond the obvious. Maybe none of these fuckers had

motivations that made any fucking sense. Maybe that was just how the universe fucking was these days.

He still hadn't replied to or acknowledged Magne. She waited a beat longer before setting the food down, not exactly looking *disappointed*, but certainly not pleased about the interaction. Katsuki couldn't find it within himself to give a fuck.

"Well, I'll leave you to it. I'm gonna have to come back to check in an hour to make sure you actually eat it. Just fair warning."

Ugh.

She left after that, and Katsuki was torn. On one hand, part of him wanted to outright refuse to eat it. But he couldn't really justify it. All he'd be doing was hurting himself at this point. Plus, he was pretty fucking sure if he didn't then he was gonna get forced into eating one way or another. Whatever method they'd use would almost certainly be worse than just sucking it up and eating some damn curry.

After waiting a few minutes to ensure he was alone, Katsuki got up and picked up the bowl. They'd left him with one of those biodegradable spoons, the kind that were basically just shaped cardboard. Damn it. If it'd been plastic he actually could've done something with it, but this was basically fucking useless.

Well, useless for anything but it's intended purpose. Katsuki took a moment to inspect the curry, looking for anything out of place and sniffing it carefully before deciding to risk it and take a bite.

...

It wasn't bad. It was too fucking bland (although that was most foods other people cooked in Katsuki's experience), and it wasn't particularly great. But it wasn't bad. And the moment food hit his stomach, his body suddenly remembered that it was hungry.

Once hunger kicked back, it didn't take him long to finish the meal off. Once he was done, he studied the bowl he'd been given it in. Solid plastic.

For a moment, he considered trying to break the bowl and make the shards into a weapon. But it was a thin sort of plastic. The kind that was more likely to just shred than do anything useful. He wouldn't get much out of that. Other than frustration, and warning them as to one of his possible plans.

Instead, Katsuki took the dish to the bathroom and cleaned it, setting it to dry next to the bowl from the night before. Idly, he considered that dish again. It hadn't tasted like there'd been anything off when he'd eaten a few bites this morning, and he couldn't recall having experienced any side effects from it. But maybe that was just because he hadn't eaten enough of it.

Or maybe there'd been someone else watching while Mistfucker made the first dish. Or he hadn't wanted to make his attempt at whatever the fuck he was doing too obvious.

In any case, Katsuki was pretty fucking glad that he hadn't eaten more than a bite or two. He'd have to be smarter about that in the future. It didn't seem like he'd be allowed to cook for himself any time soon, so he'd need to figure out who he could actually trust to make meals. Both on a 'not trying to fucking poison' him level, and on a 'can actually cook shit' level.

So far, Masky was decent for either. Magne probably wasn't going to try to poison him, but by her own admission, she couldn't cook. As he'd already decided, Mistfucker was out. He could cook, but Katsuki didn't trust him any farther than he could throw him. Which was to say that he couldn't, because the fucker was made out of that dumb swirling mist.

That left Dabi, Toga, the copy fucker, the lizard and Handsy all up in the air.

Actually, nah, fuck that. Toga and Handsy were both of the list. Handsy because Katsuki would literally rather die than eat anything that asshole made. Also, Katsuki would bet anything the guy had never made a meal before in his life. Toga might be able to cook. Or she might only drink blood. But Katsuki was pretty sure she genuinely meant well towards him. As much as someone like her could. Her idea of meaning well didn't make her any less dangerous though. She was too volatile and detached from reality to ever be harmless. While Katsuki didn't think she'd try to kill him, there was every chance she'd slip something else into his food on a whim. Something that might be worse than poison.

So, Dabi, copy fucker, lizardman. All solid maybes.

Katsuki would need to know who'd cooked any food he ate so he could figure out who was safe. At least for right now. Maybe not. Maybe he'd get a good chance to make a break for it tonight. He was

doubtful. Not about his ability to escape, he was going to get the fuck out of this hellhole come hell or high water. But it was probably going to be a day or two before he got the right chance. After all, he needed a good time when there were limited members of the league around, but still someone he could grab the keycard of.

He'd want to be sure Mistfucker was gone too. Beyond Katsuki's general distrust of him, the guy would be a pain to escape from. Same went for Masky and the copy fucker. Dabi probably wouldn't be a huge issue if he was just hanging around. Magne might be, depending on how close she was, and how inclined she was to recapture him. While Lizard and Toga were both annoying, he felt confident in taking either in a one on one fight.

For keys, Katsuki knew he needed one for sure. Unless he managed to get access to a computer capable of reprogramming these gloves, which was fucking unlikely. Dabi's was out because it was buried under his skin and holy shit, no. Toga was a maybe, although Katsuki didn't know where she kept hers. The lizard guy was also a solid option, if Katsuki could figure out where he kept his keycard. Or see him at all.

All of this required more information though. Begrudgingly, Katsuki decided to venture back out of the bedroom. The empty bowls made as good of an excuse as any. He could take them to the dining room, and if he happened to spot someone on his way he could see about getting more information. If not, he could spend a bit more time looking around in the dining room for anything useful. He hadn't had very long while Mistfucker was hanging around this morning.

Bowls in hand, Katsuki brought one of the gloves up to the reader, still not entirely convinced the door would just *open* for him. But lo and behold, the door slid open, just like it had earlier, and Katsuki stepped out. It took two more steps before he realized he wasn't alone in the hallway.

Fuck.

For a guy who was about as subtle as a horror movie villain, Handsy sure could blend in with his surroundings when he felt like it. The guy wasn't even dressed that differently- actually he might be straight up wearing his villain costume. Which might just be his normal clothing now that Katsuki was thinking about it.

There was a moment of tense silence as both of them stared at each

other, completely frozen, then Handsy's shoulders relaxed, red eyes noticing the bowls in Katsuki's hands and obviously figuring out what he was doing.

"It's good to see you up, and you ate! I was worried you might not after Kurogiri said you weren't interested in breakfast. I can--"

Katsuki would be the first to admit that he had a bit of a temper. A lot of a temper. It wasn't his fault that people were so fucking infuriating most of the time.

Still, despite what the media, his mother, and some of his classmates liked to say, Katsuki usually managed to keep himself in check when it mattered. He wasn't Deku, he didn't leap into fights on a whim, and he didn't go around picking fights he knew he couldn't win. Usually.

So it was hard for him to explain what he did next. Even to himself.

Maybe it was how that fucker had the audacity to *relax* when he saw Katsuki, as if Katsuki's presence was anything but a threat to his continued existence. Maybe it was how casual his words were, as if they were in any way on friendly terms. As if Katsuki was someone Handsy had any fucking right to be *concerned* about. Or maybe it was just that Katsuki was emotionally exhausted, pissed off, and feeling too much like a cornered animal in these stupidly tight hallways with no real exits.

Whatever the reason, Katsuki was a big enough person to admit that fucking launching himself at Handsy was a stupid move. Didn't stop him from doing it, or make him regret it. But it was still stupid.

The muscles of his arms twitched, trying in vain to create sparks. Katsuki wasn't some helpless weakling without his quirk though. Even without nitroglycerin giving his fury a fiery form, he was still perfectly capable of clawing, ripping, scratching and tearing. He could still *hurt*. And by god did he intend to hurt.

Handsy was stunned for all of a heartbeat, and then his own battle reflexes kicked in. Belatedly., Katsuki realized the guy was wearing gloves, ones that covered two fingers, probably to prevent accidental quirk use. Something that Katsuki hadn't even considered, along with common sense and self preservation.

They grappled for a second or two at most. Katsuki wasn't even sure what he was trying to accomplish other than *fighting back*, but despite Handsy's unfortunately not lackluster hand to hand combat skills,

Katsuki quickly discovered he stood a real chance against him in a quirkless fight.

Or he would've, if the motherfucker hadn't regained himself enough to speak two awful words that Katsuki would soon learn to hate more than almost any other phrase in any known language.

"Katsuki, *hands*."

Just like that, any chance he had of winning the fight was gone. Both his hands were jolted by electricity, not enough to hurt, but enough to make his muscles spasm and lose the half-grip he'd had on Handsy's arms. Worse, a second after that jolt, both his hands were suddenly yanked together by an unseen, powerful force. He tried to yank them back apart with all his strength, but it was fucking useless. Katsuki couldn't so much as twitch a finger.

They had fucking electromagnets in them. Just his fucking luck.

He still tried to keep fighting. Sharp teeth gnashed as he surged forward again, trying to sink themselves into vulnerable flesh. His efforts were proven worthless as Handsy dodged to the side, having taken advantage of Katsuki's lapse in concentration to get the upper hand in the fight. With Katsuki off-balance, the bastard was able to get a firm grip on the back of Katsuki's neck, right where it met his shoulders. It didn't hurt, and even with his stupid gloves on, Handsy was keeping one finger lifted, which made it downright fucking pathetic that Katsuki wasn't able to get free as he was forced forward back towards the bedroom door.

Said door was also now on Katsuki's list of inanimate objects that had fucking betrayed him, because it clicked open for Handsy when the dickhead tapped his wrist against it. Katsuki tried to dig his heels in and swing his weight to the side while the other was one-handed, but Handsy was faster and managed to grab hold of his bound wrists, pulling him through the doorway. Back into this stupid fucking room.

At some point, Katsuki realized he was snarling, spitting out angry insults. Handsy paid them no mind, opting instead to force Katsuki to the bed where he was pinned in place. Katsuki struggled, thrashed, kicked, teeth biting and snapping around nothing, but he was stuck. Well and truly.

After what could've easily been five minutes or two hours, given that his perception of time was completely fucked, Katsuki found himself tiring out against his will. His rational mind finally decided to say

hello again, and now matter how much he fucking hated the thought of giving in, he felt himself calming down. Or at least, getting enough self control back to stop wasting his energy.

Handsy, who'd been oddly quiet (or Katsuki just hadn't been able to hear him over his own internal rage, either was equally likely), picked up on the change and spoke, voice engagingly calm. The fucker didn't even have the decency to sound pissed!

"There you go, there's nothing to panic about. It's alright."

God, Katsuki would sell his soul in a heartbeat for the ability to punch this fucker in the face right now.

"I'm not mad at you. This is all a normal part of the adjustment process. Don't worry, you'll get better, just give it time."

Each word out of Handsy's mouth made Katsuki feel increasingly sick to his stomach and angrier than ever before in equal measure. Before he could find his voice again though, he was being released. The sheer shock of that left him frozen long enough for Handsy to reach the door to the room.

"You'll need to stay in your room for the rest of the day, that'll give you time to calm down and reflect on your actions. I'll make sure someone brings you dinner though, and you'll be allowed out tomorrow to try again. For right now though- *Release.*"

The unyielding force pinning his hands together vanished, freeing him completely. Part of Katsuki was tempted to try launching himself at the asshole again, but the rest of him was too fucking lost on what the fuck was happening right now to get the brain power together to do that.

"Night, Katsuki. Hopefully you'll feel better in the morning."

...

Well that had been a resounding failure.

Shame and self hatred curled in Katsuki's gut as he lay on the bed, curled in on himself as he tried to catch his breath. His thoughts were a jumbled mess of anger, fear, loathing, and straight confusion. It was hard to pull any one train of thought out of them.

Was this really the same guy he'd fought less than a few months ago?

Who'd tried to murder his classmates with a manic glee? Really?

They certainly didn't sound or act like the same person. The way this asshole spoke reminded Katsuki more of someone repeating words they didn't understand, but somehow still had total faith in.

That particularly thought made Katsuki uncomfortable as shit, so he shoved it firmly out of his mind. It was dumb. All of this was dumb. He just needed to focus on getting revenge and getting the fuck out of here. That was his only concern.

Rolling over, he rubbed at the back of his neck where he'd been pinned by for however long. The stretch of skin didn't hurt. It wasn't even sore, despite how long he'd been pinned. There'd be no bruises forming there. Not like when his mother would grab him to drag him somewhere or shake him around a bit when he was being a brat.

Somehow, he hated the lack of pain more. It was like he was being treated like a fucking toddler or something. Like even these asshole villains who'd fucking kidnapped him thought he was too weak to handle a few bruises, as if he hadn't dealt with so much worse throughout his life. On some level it almost made him feel guilty too, at the amount of rage and stupid, pathetic fear churning inside him. He knew that it could be worse. God it could be so, so much worse. But it wasn't. They weren't even fucking hurting him. And here he was, still shaking like he was seven years old again.

Those thoughts weren't productive, so Katsuki shoved them aside too. Even if they were true, that didn't make them helpful. Plotting was helpful. Reviewing his information was helpful. Beating himself up could wait till he was out of here.

Once he'd calmed down a bit more, he managed to refocus on escaping. Or planning his escape. Handsy kept his key in his gloves, which, alright, as much as Katsuki wanted nothing more than to beat his face in, it wasn't going to go well for him unless he had an advantage. He was better off trying something else.

The fucking electromagnets in his gloves were also going to be a problem. Handsy could activate them, and Katsuki was willing to bet Mistfucker could too. But what about the others? Could any of them use that to restrain him? All of them? Only some of them?

There was so much shit he needed answers for before he tried to escape again. He couldn't predict how many escape attempts it would take before Handsy finally snapped out of his weird fantasy world and



just offed him, which meant he needed to make each attempt count. No losing control of himself like that again.

Right now, he couldn't do any information gathering, he set about organizing his thoughts more carefully. Mentally he created more lists, firm steps that he could follow, questions he needed answered, possibilities, categorization of the current league members, all of it needed to be thought out. That was a much more productive use of his time than stewing in his emotions. It was almost relaxing too.

No, relaxing wasn't the right word for it. It was numbing. That was better. Katsuki loved and hated the numbness of facts, of raw determination, of single minded focus. It ate away at his insides and drove him mad, but it was nice when the alternatives ate away at him so much faster. The lesser of two evils. That was usually what Katsuki found himself choosing between in his life.

Speaking of which, he must've lost track of time. Or it was later than he'd thought it was earlier. Because someone was knocking at the door.

Katsuki hadn't really heard the knock the first time, he stayed silent, tired and not really in any emotional state to deal with any of these fuckers right now.

"Spitfire? You still awake in there?"

Fuck. Katsuki couldn't quite identify what pushed him to respond, his actions were just a fucking mystery to him today apparently. But respond he did.

"What the fuck do you want?"

He could *hear* the fucker's grin through the door.

"I'm supposed to bring you some food and check in on you. It alright if I come in?"

Opening his mouth, Katsuki considered saying no for the sake of saying no. He had to wonder if Dabi would actually listen if he did. Anyone else there'd be no fucking doubts. Dabi... Dabi might actually go away if Katsuki told him to. It was something to test another time. Right now he was unfortunately hungry, his attempt might've been pathetic, but it'd still burned through a lot of energy.

"Whatever."

Was what he said instead. And it wasn't really a 'yes', but both of them knew that was as close as he would get.

The door slid open a moment later, and in stepped Dabi, a plate in his hands. Some sort of glazed tofu? Katsuki eyed the plate suspiciously, even as it was set down on the desk. As if he could read his mind, Dabi spoke before Katsuki could ask who'd made it.

"Don't worry, I cooked it myself. Nothing funny going on there."

"Why the fuck do you know how to cook shit?"

Not that Katsuki could taste it, but he could see that it obviously was made by someone who knew the basics of cooking. And honestly he hadn't pegged Dabi as the type to know shit about making decent food. Could the guy even taste anything? His mouth had to be at least partially burned up, right?

"I have my ways." Oh so that was how it was gonna be, huh?

"Anyways, heard you decided to throw down with the boss earlier. He do something to piss you off?"

The question was teasing, but Dabi's intense blue eyes were watching him too closely for it to mean nothing. It was enough to make Katsuki pause before he scoffed.

"He existed."

A snort, but the intensity remained.

"Fair enough, but you know what I meant. Anythin' in particular he did or you just felt like givin' it a shot?"

"I woulda fucking pulled it off if he hadn't *cheated*."

His non-answer was answer enough, and Dabi's posture relaxed, falling back into his shitty slouch.

"No such thing as cheating in the real world, Spitfire. I can't say I'd recommend the direct approach next time, although I'll admit it was fuckin' ballsy. Maybe get creative with it and go when his back is turned. Or if you can get your hands on either side of a body part, you could put those magnets to good use."

Katsuki wasn't sure if he was more pissed off by the fact Dabi was offering him advice, or more that was actually a decent fucking idea.

In the end, he decided to just be pissed off, full stop. That was his default state anyways.

“You seem real fucking eager to help me kill your boss.”

Oh and now he was getting snickered at again. Great.

“First off, you won't kill him. Doesn't matter how pissed off you get, I've seen your eyes, you aren't that sort of person.” Wait, was that a compliment or an insult? Katsuki genuinely couldn't tell. He supposed he would rather not be viewed as a murderer, but he didn't like the implication that he was incapable of doing something. Even if that thing was murder, and something he'd never consider unless he had no other choice.

“Second, I'm just tryin' to level the playing field a bit. Keeps it interestin'.”

That was something Katsuki could work with. He glanced over to Dabi, dissecting his expression and gauging how likely he was to be able to get information out of this. There was a solid chance from what he could tell, but he was gonna need to just ask for it directly. Otherwise Dabi would probably find it just as amusing to give him the run around or cryptic answers.

“Speaking of that, are all you fuckers just allowed to fuck up my hands whenever you feel like it, or is he the only one with that privilege?”

His question was considered for a few moments before whatever dice roll governed Dabi's moral choices finished processing.

“It's pretty strictly emergency use only, but almost everyone can use it, everyone but Toga. Didn't want her to have the option, for obvious reasons.”

Thank fucking god. Sure, having most of them able to trigger the gloves wasn't fucking fun. He'd take it though as long as he didn't have to deal with that wildcard being able to disable his hands. There was something extremely fundamentally uncomfortable about that thought. Next question, figuring out the fucking power structure here. He had a fairly good guess where most of the league stood, but Dabi himself was still a major question mark.

“What the fuck are you after here anyways? Aren't you Handsy's second in command or something? Or are you just fuckin' bossy?”

“No fun in it if I just tell you what I’m up to. We don’t have official titles either, I just stepped the fuck up and told other people to get their shit together.”

Natural leader then. Dabi’s look screamed loner, as did his aloof nature, but Katsuki could see through that shit. The guy was way too good with people to have been alone most of his life.

Speaking of which, Katsuki could tell blue eyes were sweeping him over again. It was the third time they’d done that. They were looking for something still. Something that was keeping Dabi here in the room with him. One more question was probably safe before he tried to figure that out. He needed to make this count, but it couldn’t be too obvious either.

“Who the fuck is Dr. Ujiko then? He the actual doctor for your shitty gang, or just some fucker Handsy knows?”

Hell yeah. That got a reaction. Tense limbs, eyes darting up to stare straight into Katsuki’s, an unreadable emotion on Dabi’s face.

“Where’d you hear that name?”

“Around. Was told I wouldn’t want to meet him.”

“Whoever told you that was right. Keep away from him. I told ya’ Shigaraki ain’t interested in hurtin’ you or fucking with your head. Us lot will follow along with that. I can’t tell ya’ what that guy’ll do if you end up on one of his benches.”

A tense pause.

“If it happens though, ‘cause I’m not fucking delusional about how all this is gonna go down, whatever else is going on, don’t let him get you alone. Ever. Got that, Spitfire?”

Katsuki hadn’t been planning on it before, but the extra warning was enough to set him on edge. Enough to make him nod. He couldn’t help but grumble under his breath though.

“Not like I’ll have much say in it.”

Dabi cocked an eyebrow at that, before looking towards the door. Clearly debating something.

“You’ve got more power here than you think you do. It’s just not the

sort of power you're used to." As his voice softened, Dabi leaned in a little closer, blue eyes taking in Katsuki one more time before he turned back towards the door. "You're a smart kid, you'll figure it out."

And with that, Dabi was striding off. He must've found what he was looking for. Leaving Katsuki to try to unpack that unattended leopard print duffel bag of a statement. After a few minutes of getting nowhere, he stood and did some stretches to clear his mind. He couldn't do much in the limited environment, but it was better than nothing.

Katsuki finished his stretches and grabbed the food Dabi left him, taking a bite only to discover the recipe wasn't half bad. It tasted like a maple glaze, but it actually had a fair kick of spice to it. Maybe he could get the recipe from Dabi before he broke the fuck out of here. Or afterwards when the guy was in jail where he belonged. Was it weird to visit a guy who'd kidnapped you in jail to ask for a recipe? Probably. He could write a letter instead. That seemed less weird.

Thoughts of food aside, Katsuki turned his attention back to his plans. He still didn't have too much to work with, but he was starting to form a few possible escape routes. All needed more thought and more information though, and he had plenty of fucking time for both of those things right now.

A few hours later, Katsuki's bedtime rolled around and he flicked off the lights, forcing his eyes to close and his brain to shut down. Tomorrow would be better. He'd make progress tomorrow. He had to.

Like the morning before, Katsuki jolted awake at 6 *am*. Which the lying clock was still trying to tell him was 7 *am*. Whatever. Calming his racing heart an exercise in futility given the circumstances, but he put forward the effort anyway. He had to keep himself under control today, and if he couldn't get his own fucking heart to shut the fuck up and listen to orders, then the rest of him wouldn't stand much of a chance.

There were several options for what he could do next, but he settled on trying to establish some level of normalcy. Any kind of routine would help settle down his body.

To that end, Katsuki got up, flicked on the lights and opened up the dresser to grab some fresh clothing. Only, when he opened the top drawer his attention was caught by a certain black shirt that looked like the others, but distinctly was not the same fabric. This wasn't any of the shit that had been picked out for him; this was his shirt. The one he'd worn during the kidnapping.

Checking the next drawer down revealed his pants had been returned to, and both articles of clothing had been cleaned and sewn up as if nothing had ever happened to them. Mistfucker must've gotten them out of the bathroom hamper while he was out of his room. Fuck. Katsuki didn't like that one bit, even if he should've expected it. Nothing he could do about it yet though, beyond be pissed off. Which he'd already been planning on anyways. How convenient.

Showering soothed his anger, bringing it down from a raging boil to the steady simmer he was accustomed to. Katsuki towed himself off, got dressed in fresh clothing, put the old stuff in the hamper again (he'd need to check on it midday, to see if he could figure out exactly when the Mistfucker snuck in here), then he grabbed the clean bowl from last night and exited the bathroom.

At 7:20 on the dot, Katsuki tried his gloves at the reader again, and surprise surprise, the shits actually worked again. Great.

Now what?

A half formed plan to see about breaking into the kitchen surfaced and was quickly forgotten when one of the living room doors slid open, revealing none other than Dabi.

The man's posture was loose and casual, but Katsuki wasn't fooled. Those blue eyes sought him out far too quickly for this to be anything but a set up. Katsuki didn't have a fucking clue why Dabi was waiting for him. Not until the other pinned him with an ugly, awful look. It was the sort of look that people gave him when Katsuki would accidentally mention his parents had been away for the past month when he was younger. Or the look that Aizawa had given him after overhearing Katsuki bitch under his breath about some guys who'd followed him around for awhile after the sports festival shit.

That ugly look meant that Katsuki had done something wrong without realizing it again, and now an adult was going to ask questions that they didn't actually want him to answer. All they ever did was get upset about what he said. There was no winning when an adult got

that look on their face.

Fuck it. Katsuki didn't care if Dabi was upset with him. He met his that look head on, eyebrow cocked in challenge.

"What the hell is wrong with your heart rate?"

Well. Not the direction he'd been expecting this to go. Like hell he was backing down though.

"I dunno know what the fuck you're yapping about, but I know you don't have any fucking right to talk about health shit, *Staples*."

"First of all, I'll have you know my heart rate is one of the few things that isn't fucked up about me. No idea how that worked out, and I'll admit my blood pressure is fucking nothing, but my heart rate is fine."

That sounded like bullshit, but Katsuki didn't care to challenge it. His point stood regardless.

"Second, those gloves of yours track some basic shit. Location and heart rate, if you're curious. Heart rate's important 'cause the electricity shit. If something goes wrong with that, it goes wrong hard. Any of us can check that shit on our phones, and last night I took a peek to make sure everything was cool. You wanna know what I saw?"

"I've got a fucking feeling you're gonna tell me no matter what I say."

He was, admittedly, actually a bit curious. What the fuck could he possibly have done that would warrant a look like that over his fucking heart rate? The knowledge that they were tracking his location and heart rate was filed away, although the first thing would be the more problematic of the two.

"Somehow, your heart rate, which is already kinda fucking high, goes *up* when you sleep. The entire fucking night. Shit only settled down at like 7 AM, which I assume is when you finally fucking woke up."

Yeah, that added up. The nightmares tended to have that side effect.

"What's it to you asshole?"

Dabi kept up that fucking look for several long seconds before he threw his hands up in the air, offering his surrender on the matter.

"Listen Spitfire, your business is your business and all that shit. But

fuck, if you need sleeping meds or some shit, I can get some for ya'. 'Cause that shit isn't normal."

"Oh, yeah, that's what I really need right now. Drugs that'll definitely fuck me up from a villain who looks like he's an exaggerated washed up anti-smoking mascot."

The insult was shrugged off, not that Katsuki had expected much else.

"Offer stands." A beat of thought, and then Dabi was studying him again, curious. "When you say they'll fuck you up, are you talkin' about the source of 'em or just all sleeping pills in general?"

That was decidedly not a question Katsuki wanted to answer, but. Ugh. Fuck, they'd already had one close call drugging him. Plus, it wasn't like he was giving them some advantage over him. If they wanted to kill him, and they had the chance to stick him with something, they'd just use regular-ass poison.

"Both. My body doesn't like weird shit in it. Lotta the time stuff doesn't work for me like it should. Sleeping medication and painkillers usually fuck me up one way or another."

His explanation was accepted without judgement or insult, although the look on Dabi's face said he had more questions. Katsuki wasn't sure why the guy gave a fuck, but he did know that he didn't feel like talking about this shit anymore. He seemed to be in luck too, because the far hallway door chose that moment to slide open.

Toga lit up when she saw the two of them, bouncing out of her sleepiness near instantaneously.

"Morning Kat! Morning Dabs!"

The nickname had Katsuki grinding his teeth, but Dabi was talking before he could complain.

"Mornin' Vampire." Blue eyes flicked between Katsuki and Toga, reading the room, before Dabi turned and took a lazy step towards Katsuki. "Here, Spitfire, why don't you give me that bowl and I'll go make you two some breakfast, since neither of you are allowed to be cooking."

Wait, why wasn't- He didn't get the chance to ask the question. Dabi answered it with a tired expression as he held out a hand for the bowl, which Katsuki handed over as the other spoke.



“She’s managed to start a fire making *cereal*. More than once.”

“How?” Katsuki’s hissed out response escaped him before he could stop himself.

“We still don’t fucking know. None of us want to let her back into the kitchen to find out.”

“I wasn’t *that bad*.” Toga whined in protest. A protest that was ignored, as Dabi only rolled his eyes and made his way into the kitchen. Leaving the two teenagers alone in the hallways together.

How the fuck did these morons manage to kidnap him again?

A few awkward beats of silence passed before Toga made the first move, perking up and stepping forward to grab Katsuki’s arm. It took a hell of a lot of restraint to not flinch or just fucking throw her up against the wall. She dragged him towards the chair room, talking as she did so. Katsuki couldn’t hear whatever the fuck she was saying, his brain was too busy trying to keep his body under control.

She released him once they were in the chair room, plopping down into the corner armchair Katsuki had been in the day before.

“-so I tried what you suggested yesterday and look!”

It was not fucking helpful for her to shove a knife in his face when Katsuki was already doing everything in his fucking power to not lose his shit. Deep breaths. This wasn’t any different than the bullshit his classmates pulled. He could handle it.

Forcing himself down into an adjacent arm chair he took a moment to actually look at the knife she was holding out. It was a leaf blade with a wooden hilt, must’ve been the one she’d mentioned having rust problems with. There were still some traces of oxidation on the higher part of the blade, but it looked far better than what she’d described. Lot less likely to give someone fucking tetanus.

“Good, fucking keep it clean this time.”

“I will, I will, I promise!” The leaf blade was set down on the armrest and it took everything Katsuki had to not just grab it. Was she really going to just set a fucking weapon down in front of him? Really?

“I brought some of my other ones to show you too! You remember the specialized hilt I was telling you about yesterday? The one designed

for use with impact quirks like yours? Well I dug through my collection and I managed to find it!”

Shit, he was actually wondering about that one. Toga produced a knife that looked almost like a nail, with it’s hilt being short and flattened just like a nail head. No brand name, and the unique blade pattern meant it was almost certainly custom made. Probably hand forged too. Where the hell had she gotten that from?

Katsuki was so caught up in considering the blade that he didn’t really think about what he said in reply.

“Looks fuckin’ sick. Don’t suppose you’d let me borrow it sometime?”

He meant it sarcastically. Honest to god.

Toga didn’t get the memo, she only smiled brighter and promptly stuck out the knife, blade held in her hand, hilt offered to him. Proper form and fucking everything.

“You can have it if you want it!”

This had to be a trap. It had to be.

Numbly, Katsuki reached out to take the blade anyway. Keeping his movements slow and ready to jerk back the moment the other shoe dropped.

Nothing came, she let go of the blade the moment his hand clasped the hilt firmly. No alarms sounded. No gotcha moment. Toga was still smiling as she dropped back down to rest her head on the armrest next to the other knife.

“I- Thanks?”

Looking the blade over, Katsuki confirmed that it was definitely hand forged. The weighting to it was a bit off, but nothing he couldn’t figure out.

“No problem! I heard Mr. Shigaraki took all your knives away, and I figured that must’ve been why you were such a scaredy-cat yesterday. I know I always get upset when I don’t have any knives on me. I can’t really use that one anyways, so I thought this one might make you feel better!”

It took three seconds of staring at her overwhelmingly genuine

expression, like that of a cat depositing a dead mouse in front of someone, for Katsuki to realize this really wasn't a trap. She was just that crazy.

"Yeah, uh, thanks. It does... make me feel better."

That was apparently the response she wanted, because it sent her off into an excited ramble. A ramble Katsuki felt a lot more inclined to indulge her in, seeing as she'd just given him a fucking knife and all.

Before, for all his confidence, Katsuki had still had his doubts about breaking out of here. Not whether or not he could manage it, he could, he knew he could, but about how long it would take him. About all the dangers he was running into in the meantime.

Knife in hand, those doubts turned tail and ran for their fucking lives. Katsuki knew that he could handle this, no sweat. Holy shit, she'd actually just given him a knife. There was no way it'd take more than one good opportunity for him to get out of this hellhole now.

Yeah, he had this. He was gonna be alright, and that was a fucking *threat*.

## Chapter End Notes

Listen, I believe Toga genuinely means well. She's just... special.

# Toga Is Either Very Good Or Very Bad At Making Friends, Depending On How You Look At It

## Chapter Notes

**\*\*Content Warning for (spoilers ahead): accidental self harm.**

Ryohei is my name for Katsuki's childhood friend with the stretchy fingers, since we don't have a canon name for him.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

With his freshly acquired knife, Katsuki felt significantly better about his situation. Just having it in his hands made him feel a thousand times more secure. To say nothing of the shit he could do with it.

Part of him screamed that he should go on the attack again. But he wasn't dumb. Even though he was better armed and had the element of surprise, and he really *really* wanted to stab a certain someone, he wouldn't fall into that trap. Katsuki formed a new plan as he nodded along with whatever Toga was saying about a wave blade she'd seen once.

As long as he didn't raise any alarms or get himself locked up, he'd have access to the hallway once the rest of these fuckers cleared out. This knife wasn't great for hand to hand combat. It was thick, heavy, and awkward to hold since it was designed to be a projectile rather than a true knife. But all those same traits made it excellent for prying. The doors around here were sturdy, but not that sturdy, and he was pretty sure the locking mechanism would give way before the knife would.

If he was careful about it, he could almost certainly get through one door. The metal of the knife was strong but not brittle, so he might be able to get up to three doors if he was precise and lucky. He might not need to go that far though, since he'd been keeping his eye on the door at the end of the hall. While he'd only gotten a few glimpses, and his mind had been elsewhere, he could recall whatever was outside the hallway being bright. Too bright to be anything but daylight, given how the indoor areas were lit. If he could get to daylight, he could get out.

All that would need to wait though. Right now he needed to bide his

time until these fuckers cleared out.

Dabi showed up not long after Katsuki made up his mind. The guy had two plates in hand, it looked like fried rice? One plate was visibly more heavily seasoned, which was unsurprisingly the one passed to Katsuki. The other plate was handed off to Toga, and looked like it had splotches of a familiar red liquid dripped all over it. Katsuki hoped like hell that was animal blood, but didn't ask. He didn't want to know.

The food was still warm, and Katsuki refused to thank the villain for it, but he did nod his head in acknowledgement while Toga loudly called out her own thanks. Good enough. Dabi only nodded back, ruffling Toga's hair as he turned to take up one of the couches on the opposite side of the room. He hadn't made any food for himself, which almost set off alarm bells in Katsuki's head, until Dabi reached into his jacket and produced another bottle full of that protein shake stuff.

Ah. Yeah. Right. Dabi had mentioned he drank those a lot, but it looked like they might be the only thing he ate. Which honestly made a fuckton of sense. The guy had massive scarring and definitely had organ damage from whatever he went through. Protein shakes must be one of the few things he could eat with his system all fucked up.

Assured his meal *probably* wasn't poisoned, Katsuki took the weird cardboard fork he'd been given and started in on the food, only pausing to correct an old wife's tale Toga parroted or grunt an affirmative to something she was babbling about.

The morning progressed uneventfully after that. Masky stopped by for a few minutes, though he only spoke to Dabi in a hushed voice Katsuki couldn't pick up, and Magne came by to say hello, but kept her distance.

It wasn't until a little before noon that anything interesting happened. Katsuki had been content to chatter with Toga for a few hours, but his social energy ran out eventually. Even under the best of circumstances, Katsuki could only stand to be directly interacting with other human beings for so long, and these were hardly the best of circumstances. At least he'd found out that most of the league would be gone after 3 pm and wouldn't be back until late tonight, which was almost perfect for him.

Still, he'd been trying to think up an excuse to leave and get some time alone, when one of the two league members he hadn't met

properly poked their scaly head into the room.

Lizard Guy, (Who Katsuki was now mentally renaming 'Mr. Ugly Scarf' because seriously, what the fuck was thing even supposed to be?) had a weird, almost nervous vibe about him. He spotted Katsuki immediately. Ugh. There was no way this was a simple introduction. Not with how those unblinking eyes honed in on him.

Mr. Ugly Scarf slid into the room with what looked like books in his arms. Several of the covers looked familiar. They were novels, eight total, and Katsuki's attention was drawn to them even though he knew he should be paying attention to the person holding them.

"Hi, uh, Shigaraki asked me to bring these to you. He, uh, thought you might want something, for while we're out. But he didn't want to bring 'em himself, since he didn't want to uh, upset you. Again. I'm Spinner by the way. In case you didn't know."

The guy mumbled out a half-assed explanation as he held out the books, but Katsuki was too distracted to care as he finally realized why the books looked so familiar. They were a mixed collection of books from two separate series he'd gotten into during middle school. He'd left both behind after the slime villain incident, he hadn't had any time for distractions from his training. But he'd recognize those covers anywhere.

How the fuck did Handsy know he'd liked those? It'd been at least two years since he'd talked about either series with *anyone*, and he'd donated all of his own copies to his local library after he'd decided to give them up. He'd never posted about them online. Fuck, his own parents didn't know he liked those books. Not that that was saying much, but still!

A cough from Mr. Ugly Scarf broke his mental spiral. Oh. He'd been staring for awhile, huh?

"I'll, uh, I'll just leave these here."

The books were set down gently on the small coffee table nearby before Mr. Ugly Scarf made a hasty retreat. Any satisfaction Katsuki got from the villain's obvious discomfort around him was far outweighed by mounting horror and anger.

Katsuki almost lost his shit again. Almost.

Dabi must've seen it coming, because he picked that very moment to

swing up onto his feet and address both teenagers.

"Come on Toga, we've got to get ready for this afternoon. Spitfire, why don't you drop those off in your room, and I'll throw together some lunch for you before we head out?"

Stay calm. Don't cause a scene. He couldn't ruin his chance of escaping. It wasn't worth it. It wasn't worth it.

With every ounce of control Katsuki possessed, he clamped down on the fury burning under his skin, pulsing through his veins. By the time he got out of this shithole, his teeth would be worn to nubs by how hard he ground them, but that was for future Katsuki to worry about. Current Katsuki ground his teeth and held his tongue. He gave Toga a curt nod in lieu of a proper goodbye, since his fragile restraint would surely shatter under the weight of trying to speak, then he grabbed the books and stormed off back to his cell.

Yes. That was a better name for it. Not 'his room' or even 'the bedroom'. No. It was a fucking cell, and he needed to remember that. No matter what bullshit Handsy was playing at.

Back behind the false safety of metal doors, Katsuki let himself go. Just a little. He slammed the books down on the desk, splaying them out to confirm what they were. No doubt about it, these were his old favorites.

*"What the actual fuck."*

The hissed words vastly understated his current emotions, but it seemed that phrase was the only one he had left that came anywhere close to expressing his inner turmoil.

Katsuki couldn't stand to look at the books. He dropped onto the bed instead, letting himself curl up on top of the covers, facing the door. As if that helped somehow. As if seeing someone coming would help somehow.

God, he wanted to explode something. The urge to spark off, to burn, to do *anything* to let out the rage pounding at his skull and searing through his veins gripped him like how teeth gripped flesh. His body screamed at him to do it, it begged him for that release, but he couldn't do it. He couldn't fucking do it.

Deep breaths. Deep breaths. Fuck, he had to keep breathing. If he lost control of his breathing, he'd lose everything.

Sink or swim. Those were the only two options. Katsuki sure as fuck wasn't going to sink, so he needed to learn how to swim in these new waters. Step one was breathing, then he could figure out the rest of this shit.

Breathe.

In.

Out.

In.

Out.

Alright, the books.

There was no way it was a lucky guess. One of the two series, the first six books, were popular enough that it could've been random, but the second series was indie. Katsuki had picked up the first one randomly at a queer bookstore because the cover art looked fuckin' badass. The story had lived up to it, and when he'd found out that it was only the first one, he'd been hooked. Turned out that bookstore was one of only a handful of places that carried the series, so Katsuki had to make the trip back each time he wanted to get the next one.

That couldn't be a coincidence. There was no way Handsy had been keeping tabs on Katsuki for that long either. If he'd been that invested before, it would've come up during the USJ attack.



Katsuki knew what people who were too interested in him felt like. He'd been through this enough times to know each and every red flag by heart. How people's eyes lingered for too long; how their interest hung heavily in the air like a fog. Handsy hadn't been acting anything like that at USJ. At most there'd been a flicker of interest when he'd pinned Kurogiri, but that was a passing glance. Nothing that would indicate shit like this.

So, Handsy couldn't have learned that shit from spying. He wouldn't have learned that shit from Katsuki either. Even drugged out, Katsuki hadn't thought about the series in ages. He wouldn't have thought to talk about it, even if he was asked about books.

That meant they had to have an outside source, which would also explain how they knew about his taste in food.

The books actually helped narrow things down by a lot. Only three people knew he'd read that particular series; Ryohei, Deku, and the owners of the bookstore.

He felt confident crossing off the owners of the bookstore. It'd been months since he'd visited them in person, and they knew better than to go blabbing to anyone about their customers. They'd never even asked for his name now that he thought about it. He'd always paid in cash, so there wouldn't have been any records to steal.

That left Ryohei and Deku. It'd been awhile since he'd spoken to Ryohei. They texted every so often, but rarely had a chance to meet up in person. With low grades and a generic quirk, stretchy fingers, Ryohei hadn't made it into UA. Neither of them ever expected him too, and both of them were busy with other shit, but Katsuki still found himself missing his childhood friend from time to time. He missed the quiet understanding, how Ryohei knew when not to push him, he missed being able to just say shit without risking weird looks or people prying further.

A small part of him wondered if he'd ever get to see the other boy again. Katsuki told that small part of him to shut the fuck up, because of course he fucking would. He'd get out of here and they could meet up once the dust had settled. Just like they always had before.

Back to the matter at hand, Ryohei wouldn't have told them anything. He knew to keep his mouth shut about anything involving Katsuki. Vague answers and implying the two weren't close. Katsuki was listed under a different name in his phone and vice versa. Both of them were

Careful about that shit. Losing Tsubasa had drilled the importance of keeping things private into the both of them. Besides, the league probably wouldn't even know to ask him. Katsuki's phone had been in his bag at the training camp, and without those texts, nobody would connect him to Ryohei these days.

That left one person. The only person who knew this shit about him, and who would go running his mouth to anyone that asked.

Deku.

He wouldn't have told the guy in person. Katsuki knew Deku was a blabbermouth, but he wasn't going to spill his guts to villains. But real life wasn't the only place Deku liked to run his mouth.

Goddammit, that shitty nerd *promised* Katsuki he wouldn't post shit about him online anymore.

Of course, that only happened after an incident in their middle school when Katsuki finally cornered him over it. Several of their classmates managed to find Deku's blog *again*, filled to the brim with way too much fucking information about Katsuki's quirk. Deku had told him that he wouldn't post any information about Katsuki online anymore. He'd looked Katsuki in the fucking eyes and he'd *sworn* to him he wouldn't, and that he'd remove anything he'd already put online.

Really, Katsuki was hardly surprised that Deku had broken his promise. But he was still vaguely disappointed. In Deku, and in himself for believing the shitty nerd. He should've known better.

That'd also explain why they knew so much about his quirk. Deku was like a rabid dog with a chew toy when it came to that stuff. Hell, they probably got the idea to negate his quirk from one of his blog posts.

Ugh.

Katsuki wanted to be angry about it. He was angry about it. But at the same time, he was too exhausted to be mad. He'd been through this fight with Deku a hundred times before. Telling the other to back off, telling him to stop writing notes about him in those weird notebooks, telling him to just *leave him alone*, but nothing ever changed. He'd thought that maybe, just maybe, with UA and getting a whole fucking quirk of his own, Deku might've laid off. He'd dared hope that maybe things were improving.

Apparently not.

*Ugh.*

Well. At least now he knew where they were getting their info. It wasn't exactly comforting, but it was shit he was used to. This was familiar if nothing else. Whenever he got out of here, he could yell at Deku again. Try to get him to knock it off. It probably wouldn't work, but who knew. Maybe this time, since Deku got to actually see the result of his bullshit, he'd catch the hint. A guy could dream.

Katsuki left that train of thought alone, it wasn't doing him any good. Instead, he focused on planning his escape. Which was a nicer and more productive activity.

He was half tempted to try to cut the gloves off, electricity be damned, but he was 99% that it wouldn't go well. The knife wasn't built for slicing or carving, and there was no room to get the blade under the skintight material. The stuff didn't look like it'd cut easier either. He'd be a lot better off focusing on getting out first, and then finding another some source of heat to burn them off, or at least disable the tracker.

This was a villain base, so odds are they'd have something that'd do the trick laying around. Worst came to worst, he was probably gonna break the knife at some point anyways, and the metal splinters would be sharp enough to jam at the various electronics.

Dabi came by at some point while he was thinking, dropping off some food and mentioning that 'Twice' would come check up on him at about 6 pm. That was the clone guy, which meant he was the one staying behind tonight. Not ideal, but not the worst of them. Katsuki decided to keep to his original plan, and chilled out in his cell until 4 pm finally rolled around. He ate the food provided, and changed clothes so he was now dressed as warmly as possible. There was nothing waterproof, but he could work with anything as long as he got out of here.

The villains would be gone for at least a few more hours. This was his chance. He double checked the knife, just to ensure it was actually still there and not a weird fever dream, and then made his way over to the door.

Just as he'd hoped, the door to his cell slid open. Fucker's hadn't

bothered to lock him in here while they were gone. Probably though that he couldn't do shit in the few rooms he had access to. Joke was on them though, since they forgot to account for the insanity of their own members.

Katsuki didn't waste any time, he made his way down the hallway as quickly and silently as he could. Once he got to the door at the end, the one everyone else came and left through, he inspected the frame carefully. The center seemed to be about where the lock was, so Katsuki targeted his prying force as close to that as he could. He pressed his knife in, against the seal meant to prevent attacks like these.

It took some wiggling, but eventually he managed to get his knife into a good location, where he could feel the lock straining against him. A vicious grin overtook his face as he tightened his grip on the knife and pushed with all his strength.

Hell fucking yes.

The lock gave way, snapping open, and letting Katsuki out into mid-afternoon light. It'd been a long time since daylight gave him this much relief. He felt like he could finally breathe.

Only.... there was a problem. He wasn't outside. Not yet.

The area he'd broken into appeared to be an underground garden. Although, 'garden' might be a bit of a stretch, the area was overgrown and poorly tended to, mostly just weeds and grass. Glass made up the ceiling, glass and metal supports that appeared to be flush with the ground.

Well, it wasn't ideal. Nothing about this situation was fuckin' ideal. But it was progress.

Katsuki took a moment to inspect his knife, it wasn't exactly in bad shape, but it wasn't going to be able to take more than one or two more doors at best. The tip was already bent from the first one. Right. He'd need to use it sparingly.

Taking in his surroundings more carefully, Katsuki noted that the room was rectangular. There were four doorways leading out from the

room, indicating this was the center of the base. Good, meant it shouldn't be too large. Less good were the walls of the room, which were relatively smooth. The skylights would also be a pain and a half to get a grip on, and they didn't look weak. He couldn't see any tools laying around that would help him, so it was gonna be this knife and brute force only.

So that left him with two options, either try for one of the doors and risk running into the clone guy or getting lost, or try to get up to the skylights and force his way out.

Shit. Neither was particularly great.

There was a singular tree in the far left corner, it was a Sakura, it wasn't in great health, and it only went about halfway up, but it could help. If he used that and shimmied his way up using the corner to brace, then he could probably get up to the ceiling. Then he could see how strong the glass really was. If push came to shove, his knife should be able to break it. Then it'd just be a matter of getting the fuck out of here without cutting himself too badly. Maybe the gloves would even help with that. Once he was out, if the gloves survived that shit, he could use the glass to cut them off. At least enough that he could use his quirk to finish the job.

Katsuki had made up his mind to give it a shot, when his luck ran out and the door on the opposite side of the room swished open. His limbs locked up, there was nowhere to hide. Fuck. Fuck. The guy could totally see him.

Alright, plan B. Act fucking confident and hope for the best. If that fails, then stabbing and running was his last resort.

Forcing himself to relax, Katsuki took a long, judgemental look at the guy, then looked away. Turning to inspect one of the plants instead, and pretending really, *really* hard that he didn't have a knife in his hands, and that he didn't care that the guy could see him.

For several long seconds, the guy stayed silent. It took everything Katsuki had to keep up the act and pretend that he belonged, to not panic or try to fight, but then-

"Oh hey! Right! Shigaraki mentioned I'd see you around soon!"  
*"Shouldn't even fucking be here. Should be dead."*

Fuck yeah. Okay, he could do this. Katsuki turned and gave the guy a sullen half glance before turning back to keep inspecting the plant, fingering its leaves gently. As if this was all perfectly normal. Hopefully the guy had other shit to do besides bother him, although Katsuki wasn't too optimistic about being left alone anytime soon. The guy didn't seem put off by being ignored and bounded over like an over-enthusiastic puppy, more than happy to engage with whatever Katsuki was doing.

"I'm glad you're doing better! You had us all worried what with the bad reaction to the drugs and all that!" *"Would've saved me some trouble if you'd died then."*

Was it better to keep ignoring him, or throw the guy a bone? He might get suspicious if Katsuki didn't say anything, but Katsuki also wanted him gone as soon as possible. Ugh. Okay, maybe he could convince the guy to leave? He kept his voice as flat and unimpressed as possible.

"I'm doing fine."

Clone guy wasn't bothered by his lack of interest and instead turned his attention to the plant Katsuki had been pretending to study.

"Oh! Were you looking after the plants? It's been a long time since this base was used, apparently they upgraded awhile back. The garden's are basically dead now. You could fix them up if you wanted though! I could help you!" *"It's a waste of time, and I will do nothing of the sort."*

That... Hm. That was something to keep in mind. It might be a good excuse to get some tools he could use as weapons. But for right now he just needed this guy gone, and if he said yes to starting a project, there'd be no chance for that. Not worth it.

"Nah. Just gettin' some fresh air and tryin' to relax."

Was the guy gonna take the hint? Probably not. For fuck's sake, it was like the idiot squad back at school, but rather than being mildly annoying, the guy was an active threat to Katsuki's freedom and health. Although honestly, the idiot squad back at school kinda was too, but it was to a lesser degree.

"I totally get that! It's nice to go outside from time to time! Oh, I was supposed to run down to get some info from the lab for the others, but after that I can come back and hang out with you!" *"I've got too much shit to do to be wasting time with you."*

The lab? The fuck was that? How long was that going to take him? Katsuki nodded, since he didn't really have a better response, and any time away was better than none. He'd need to move quickly, but he could get up there and try *something*.

For one glorious moment, it looked like the guy was going to leave.

And then something changed about the air. It sunk, heavier now, and Katsuki knew he was caught.

Fuck.

Clone guy had only taken a single step, still way to fucking close for comfort (he had stepped to the right, so that meant the lab was over that way? Huh. That could be important). Katsuki didn't even have time to worry about him, as a certain misty asshole picked that moment to materialize in the center of the grassy area. Yellow eyes honed in on Katsuki instantly. Fuck.

Honestly though, he expected more anger, or at least a fair bit more annoyance, what with how the guy had been acting when trying to get him to eat. Instead, all Katsuki got was a tired look, splashed with a touch of mild disgruntlement.

The new arrival caught Clone Guy's attention, and the guy bounced in place, waving and practically beaming as he called out to the other.

"Heya Kurogiri! What are you doing back? Did the mission finish up early?"

Mistfucker's gaze didn't move from Katsuki. Yeah. Okay. Breaking the door probably triggered a silent alarm then. Fuck. The knife was still in his hand, and while Clone Guy hadn't noticed it, Mistfucker definitely had. When the other replied, voice smooth and formal as ever, his attention stayed firmly on Katsuki, with no openings for him to escape or attack.

"Ah, not quite Twice. I'm just back to have a quick chat with Bakugou. Please continue with what you were doing."

Clone guy nodded, and that was all the warning Katsuki got before darkness engulfed him.

Panic surged, but in an instant, light broke through the darkness. No liquid filled his lungs. He was fine, he was fine, he was-

Back in his fucking cell. Oh for fuck's sake.

The knife vanished from his hand, everything looked just like he'd left it ten minutes ago.

Mistfucker appeared a moment later. He eyed Katsuki for a long second before sighing, his dumb mist hair swirling faster for a few moments before he raised his left hand to rub at what Katsuki assumed was his forehead.

"While I understand you may be feeling cooped up right now, I have to ask you not to break any of the doors. Turning off the alarm is quite a pain, particularly when I'm trying to do take care of other pressing matters."

With that, the asshole teleported out. Katsuki didn't even get the chance to tell him to fuck off. Anger and humiliation burned in his chest in equal measure. He could feel tears push at the corners of his eyes. Fuck. No. He wasn't going to cry over this. What the fuck? He wasn't fucking Deku, he didn't cry over meaningless shit.

"Fuck!" Katsuki screamed and slammed a closed fist into the desk where those stupid fucking books were still sitting. Fire burned in his veins, and he wanted to keep breaking things, he wanted to fucking explode, but he held himself back just barely. Knowing that if he did try to break shit, he was liable to hurt himself in the process.

It wasn't worth it. It wasn't worth it. It. Wasn't. Worth. It.

Deep breaths. He was still going to get out of here. Maybe-

As soon as the thought struck him, he ran to the door, quickly testing his gloves to the reader. Nope. Fuck. Mistfucker must've disabled it, which meant he wouldn't be able to get back to the door he broke. Fuck. There was no way he was getting another chance like that. Toga had literally handed him a fucking knife, and he still managed to fuck it up. Fucking pathetic.

Katsuki let himself fall to the ground, curled against the wall in a ball



of anger and self-loathing as he reflected on all the shit he could've done better.

He was still getting out of this hellhole. He was going to fucking do it or die trying. But god, this was going to make things a lot more fucking difficult. There was no way he was getting another chance like that.

"-But then this morning, Kurogiri said he took your knife! He said that you were 'behaving inappropriately' and 'breaking things' so you weren't allowed to have it back until you 'learned to use it responsibly'. I told him that wasn't fair, because it's your knife and you should be allowed to use it how you want, but he wouldn't listen to me! So I got you another one, just don't tell him about it, okay?"

Alright.

This had to be a fucking TV show. There was no other possible explanation for this shit.

Katsuki numbly accepted the new knife that Toga held out to him, unable to process that not only was she giving this to him, she was doing it despite having been told not to, and knowing what he did with the first one. She'd started in on her rant as soon as Dabi had left to make breakfast, for fuck's sake, it'd been less than ten minutes since he left his cell. And she'd just *given him a second knife*.

God, this girl really was a special kind of crazy, huh?

"I won't." And then after a moment of thought. "Thanks."

The knife she'd given him this time was a normal blade, made of decent steel. Too thin to pry open any doors, but he'd already learned that was a bad idea. He'd need to get someone else's key. Dabi, Mistfucker and Toga were all out. Dabi because his was under his fucking skin, Mistfucker because the knife wasn't going to do shit, and Toga because Katsuki couldn't find it within him to stab her after she'd given him not one, but two knives. He wouldn't consider them friends by any means, but she'd been mentally upgraded to 'acceptable company' as far as he was concerned.

Speaking of company, Katsuki heard the click of the door about to slide open just in time to shove the knife into his hoodie's pocket. Keeping a straight face was tough, but it was just Dabi, and the guy didn't seem overly interested in picking Katsuki apart today.

So, now he had another knife.

Fucking amazing. All he had to do was use this knife carefully and he'd be free in no time. Easy fucking peasy.

He did not use this knife carefully.

In his defense, he'd planned to. Honest to god, he'd been figuring out their schedules, he'd let two days go by with only minor incidents of grumpiness so the assholes would drop their guards. Mistfucker was supposed to be out on a mission the next evening, and Katsuki had been planning to take advantage of the absence to corner whoever he could find with his knife.

The problem was that as time wore on, he found keeping his temper in check to be harder and harder. He felt like dynamite about to go off with the slightest provocation. Once he actually glanced in the mirror, sure that his teeth must've lost their sharp edge from how hard he'd been grinding them together. They hadn't, but he still felt like his body was fundamentally wound up and on the verge of something awful. More than once he considered trying to cut off the gloves, and it was getting harder and harder to resist the thought.

It was stupid, he knew it was, but he wanted them off so fucking badly. The night before he'd woken up from a brand new nightmare. Lava trapped under his skin, pumping through his veins like blood and burning him alive from the inside out. He could get it out, he knew he could, but the stupid gloves prevented it. Kept it trapped instead him, When he woke he ripped and pulled at the awful fabric in a desperate panic, but it did nothing. He could do nothing.

Nightmare aside, the rest of the day had just gone horribly. By 'being stuck with a bunch of delusional villains who could kill him at any moment' standards no less. Dabi had been gone in the morning, which meant Mistfucker had cooked breakfast for him. Obviously, Katsuki didn't eat that shit. Mistfucker didn't push it this time, only sighing softly as if he was *disappointed* and leaving the food 'in case you change your mind'.

Not only that, but Toga had been getting too close again. She didn't do shit, but she was *too fucking close*. Reminding her to back off only worked for a minute at most, and led to another comment on how *sweet* he smelled. It took everything he had to not snap at her to shut the fuck up about it.

Other fuckers from the league had been by, trying to make idle conversation with him. Most of them had taken to using his first name by now, save Masky and Dabi. The familiarity made his skin crawl. Everything built up little by little.

By lunchtime, Katsuki was a live wire, ready to fuck up the next asshole who so much as uttered a word to him. He'd hidden in his cell, hoping that he'd be able to cool off a bit before evening rolled around, and then he could make his move.

But fucking Handsy had decided that was the perfect time to come 'visit' him. Just the sight of him grated on Katsuki's last nerve. Then he opened his fucking mouth.

"I heard you've been adjusting and making an effort, and I'm proud of you—"

That was all Katsuki heard, and his vision went *red*. Blood pounded in his ears, so hot and heavy for a moment he was in his nightmare again and it was lava, but this time that heat, that anger, that burning was directed towards the fucker who'd dared even think that bullshit, let alone say it out loud.

His body moved on it's own, the knife materializing in his hand, and then there was blood. Someone was shouting, fifty-fifty it was him. Red eyes looked *scared*, jerking away from him, and for a moment, Katsuki felt victorious.

Then he was grappled to the side. Katsuki couldn't see who it was, couldn't see at all. He was thrashing, trying to fight back but the knife was gone and his mind was blank with rage. By now he was pretty sure he was shouting, the other person probably was too.

Someone was pinning him down to the bed, and that lasted an eternity in the moment but felt like no time at all afterward. In a century-long blink of the eye, he was exhausted. His body went lax, and the person let go of him. Another blink and they were gone. The clock on the wall should tell him the time, but it refused to, no matter

how hard he stared and tried to make sense of the symbols he knew should be numbers. Fucking traitorous clock. First it lied to him, and now it refused to even tell him it's bullshit time at all. Worst fucking clock he'd ever had the misfortune of meeting.

Lifting his head was an impossible task, but he managed to get high enough to glance at the room. One of Handsy's tattered gloves was on the ground. The one without the key, now stained dark red. Katsuki must've cut it off. Fearful red eyes played through his thoughts again.

Any lingering feelings of victory drained from his body at the realization that Handsy had been scared *for* him, not *of* him.

God, Katsuki hated that man.

Eyes sliding shut, Katsuki tried not to think about Handsy's words. It was hard though- it was so hard even though it shouldn't be. Katsuki didn't fucking want his praise, he wanted the opposite. The mere thought of the villain's approval made him gag. Bullshit like that shouldn't *mean anything*-

And yet.

*'I'm proud of you'*

No matter how hard he wracked his brain, Katsuki couldn't recall an adult ever saying they were proud of him. Not like that. Not like they meant it. Praise? He'd gotten plenty of that bullshit, teachers telling him how strong or smart or whatever the fuck he was. Meaningless words from extras he didn't care for. Never pride. Never pride in him.

Tomura Shigaraki was the first adult to say he was proud of Katsuki. How fucked up was that?

It shouldn't mean anything, but it did. Somehow those four little words felt uniquely violating. Like something deeply personal had been stolen from him. How fucking dare that asshole say he was proud of Katsuki? Who gave him the fucking right?

Anger surged in his gut, but Katsuki was too tired to lose his shit again. His body felt heavy, even shifting to get under the covers felt like too much work. Fuck, even tilting his head made his vision blur.

Would he think of Shigaraki whenever he heard someone say they were proud of him? Were those words permanently poisoned for him now?

Ugh. It didn't fucking matter. In the grand scheme of things, this bullshit was the least of his problems.

Besides, given his track record, it wasn't like he'd hear that shit from anyone else anyways.

At some point Katsuki must've fallen asleep, though he couldn't recall when.

He woke up gasping. It'd been back to his usual nightmares. Drowning, drowning, drowning. Metal in his mouth, in his arm, nobody coming to save him. Every gory detail he remembered, and the handful that faded out when he finally woke up. Same old, same old.

Sometimes he wondered about the things he couldn't remember. Most of his kidnappings he remembered vividly, replaying them over and over again, highlighting every way that something could've gone wrong. A few were hazy. Drugs had been involved each time, that much he knew for sure. He had a notebook with the dates, people he could remember who were involved, all that jazz. Even awake, he could recall flashes of what he saw in his nightmares. Vague concepts, fear and pain. But he couldn't remember the entirety of what had happened, or how he'd managed to escape those kidnappings.

It bothered him. Katsuki didn't like not knowing things. But all the same, he was also somewhat glad to be rid of at least a few of the awful memories. If his brain decided to repress that shit, he didn't want to know. That was what he told himself anyways.

Despite having slept for longer than usual, he still felt weary to his bones. His body was heavy like an oddly shaped bag of sand, but he summoned his strength and forced himself to come to life.

Katsuki had work to do.

Surprisingly, he was allowed out of his room that morning. Looks like ‘groundings’ were a one day event only. Unsurprisingly, Toga wasn’t there like she had been previously. Katsuki hated to admit it, but a worried guilt filled his chest at her absence, even as he pretended not to notice, settling in his usual armchair after exchanging a greeting nod with Dabi.

They wouldn’t have killed her, right? Sure, they were villains, but they weren’t that sort of villain. He thought they weren’t.

Dabi didn’t take long, he returned with fried eggs on rice that Katsuki accepted without a word.

“Toga’s out on a mission, should be back tomorrow.”

A sigh of relief almost escaped his throat, but he fought it down. He wasn’t supposed to care what happened to her. Katsuki was smarter than that.

Still, it meant he’d have a chance to get another knife. Assuming they hadn’t talked some sense into her.

As Katsuki picked his way through his food, he started plotting. Knife or no knife he’d need to make another attempt soon. The dining room sprung to mind, it had the chairs. If he could get someone alone in there which didn’t seem too hard, he could use those to take ‘em out, grab their key and run for it.

Once he had that key, the garden wasn’t going to be helpful unless he had the right tools to break out, and whatever tracker they had in his gloves would also be a pain to deal with. But clone guy had mentioned a lab, one that Katsuki knew the rough direction of. A lab of any kind should have shit he could use, given the sort of fuckery these assholes got up to. He’d be able to get these damn gloves off with any luck. If he could do that, he could get out. Maybe-

“You think too fuckin’ loudly. It’s not just gears turning, you’ve got a whole factory clanging around in there.”

Right. Dabi was still here. The guy was watching him from across the room, sipping at one of his protein shakes.

“Somehow, I’m not surprised that thinking shit through is an unfamiliar concept to you.”

Dabi just shrugged in response, not denying anything. Silence fell between them, each waiting for the other to make a move.

“I’m not gonna be a fucking villain. This shit is a waste of everyone’s time.”

Restating it made him feel better. Not by much, but a little bit.

“First part is all up to you, but I can’t agree this is a waste, even if it doesn’t work out like the boss thinks it will.”

“The fuck? If I don’t become a villain this shit’s all totally pointless. How’s that not a waste of time?” Katsuki let disbelief color his voice, purposefully avoiding the first part of Dabi’s reply. If it’d eased the tension winding within him, then that was his fucking business and nobody else’s.

A partially burned hand waved him off lazily as an asshole grin spread over Dabi’s face.

“Sure, it’d be great if you decided to do a heel face turn and become a villain, but even if you don’t, as long as you’re stuck here, we win. The heroes fucked up and failed to get you back. If we’d just killed you it wouldn’t prove shit. Killing a 16 year old isn’t that hard. Holding a 16 year old captive while half the damn country is looking for him? That’s fucking impressive. Even if you get away, it’s still a win for us by this point. The longer you’re here, the more it counts for.”

Fuck. That made an awful lot of sense. He needed to get out of here. Even more than before. Part of Dabi’s statement caught his attention though, and it was dumb, but-

“People are still looking for me?”

It’d been- A week? Two weeks? The fuck was anyone doing wasting

time searching for him? They had to think he was dead by now. Or at the very least not worth it anymore. Right?

Blue eyes narrowed, reading too much into that little question.

“Well, yeah. They can’t just admit defeat when they know we’ve still got you. Otherwise they might as well just hand the entire country over to us while they’re at it.”

“... How do they know you assholes still have me?”

Oh, Katsuki *hated* the smug look on Dabi’s face.

“We’ve had a few run ins, and the boss is pretty strict on not tellin’ ‘em anything about you, but he doesn’t mind telling them that they’ll ‘see you again when you’re ready’. That’s kinda a tip off that you haven’t bitten the dust yet.”

Katsuki’s rage slammed into him at full force. He no longer regretted attacking Handsy, no matter how much of a stupid idea it had been. Instead, he regretted not having gone for the eyes. Should’ve fucking cut those out, that woulda taught him a fucking lesson. Would’ve stopped him from hurting people- from hurting people who had actually bothered to give a shit about Katsuki. Even if it was only because they had to.

None of the league members had been caught yet, and if none of them had been caught, then they must’ve been at least somewhat successful in those fights. Success for the villains meant-

“Easy Spitfire, they’re all fine. Mostly. Some broken bones, but nothin’ their healers couldn’t fix up. We’ve been focused on other stuff.”

“Like what? Literally what do you assholes even do beyond fucking with my class?” Seriously, Katsuki had been here and gotten the whole recruitment speech and he still had no idea what the league of villains actually wanted or did. It was like the villain equivalent of a ‘digital media specialist’.”



“Workin’ on long term projects, I’m sure you’ll find out about ‘em eventually.”

Well, Katsuki hadn’t expected anything besides vague bullshit, but he was still pissed off by it.

“You’re an asshole.” He said, with all the venom he could muster.

Dabi laughed, deep, throaty, and unfairly smug. “Trust me, Spitfire, I’m aware.”

There was nothing else to be said on the matter, so Katsuki focused on eating his breakfast instead.

He passed that day in his room, focusing on doing what exercise he could. There might’ve been better uses of his time, but he had felt pent up again by mid-day, and he needed to get that energy out before he got another knife, lest he lose his shit and ruin another plan.

Step one was getting another knife if he could, it’d be useful as fuck, but the dining room chairs would work in a pinch. He might use those anyway, even if he did get another knife.

The next morning, Toga was back. Katsuki had carefully prepared a number of excuses, of ways he could talk her into giving up another weapon.

When they sat down together, she was the one to broach the subject.

"Mr. Shigaraki said you stabbed him with the knife I gave you."

Weirdly enough, it wasn't an accusation. Merely a statement, that even she seemed a bit confused by. Katsuki had always believed in honesty, so he nodded. Not quite sure what she was looking for.

"Did he do something to you?" She asked, and god, Katsuki wanted to point out that he was CURRENTLY FUCKING KIDNAPPED, since these morons kept forgetting it, but he refrained.

If he was being perfectly honest, he probably would've done it even if he wasn't kidnapped, so he left that answer to the wayside. Instead, he answered as honestly as he could, managing to keep his voice near casual.

"Not really. He was just there, and talking, and all the sudden I just really needed to stab him. I probably shouldn't have done it, but it felt right at the time. You know?"

Toga nodded sagely, and not for the first time, Katsuki remembered that they were the same age. Or close to it anyways. He wondered what fucked up stuff must be going on inside her head for his reply to make sense to her. It certainly didn't make any fucking sense to him.

"It's okay, he's not upset with you. He understand it happens sometimes. I tried to stab him the first time we met too, and now we're friends!"

Right. Villain job interviews must be fucking weird. Did they even have job interviews? Did they have fuckin' resumes? He wouldn't know, he'd just gotten fucking headhunted against his will. Would it be appropriate to ask about that, or would it distract her too much?

The other teenager must've taken his silence as concern, and she quickly reassured him.

"He was a bit mad at me for giving you the knife, but he's the one who took away your knives in the first place, so he doesn't gets to be upset if I fix that! I think he just doesn't understand 'cause he doesn't use knives. All he ever uses is his hands."

Yeah, Handsy did seem like the kind to over-rely on his quirk. Though he'd actually been fucking decent at hand to hand the few times Katsuki had fought him. Which didn't quite add up, but Katsuki didn't care enough to try to puzzle that shit out right now.

"Some people just don't get it." An easy statement for her to take and project whatever she wanted onto. Toga threw her hands up in agreement, looking exasperated at the very universe itself.

"Exactly! Knives are so nice! They're sharp, and lovely, and they can do so many things. They make people so pretty, and reveal all that lovely, lovely blood..."

Shit, she was leaning in, her eyes having gone a bit hazy. Katsuki had to fight not to jerk back, holding his ground and hoping his irritation would read as sympathetic rather than directed at her.

"I found out in my second week that one of my classmates doesn't carry *any* knives. Like, ever. I dunno how he's survived this long."

He'd actually found out that two of them didn't- Sparky and Kirishima. Sparky was understandable, he had to be very careful about having any metal on him, and while Katsuki still thought that a bone knife or something would be better than nothing, he understood they weren't easy to get when you were underage. Kirishima had no such excuses though, beyond his stupid sunshine attitude and insistence that the world was a kind place.

An ugly part of Katsuki wondered if Kirishima still thought that after what they'd just gone through. An uglier part hoped that he did. Even if it was stupid, even if it put the moron in danger, sometimes Katsuki liked to listen to Kirishima talk about how he saw the world and pretend it was anything but a delusional fantasy.

"It's a shame that so many people don't understand. I've been trying to explain to Mr. Shigaraki, but he just won't listen. He almost did at first, but then Mr. Kurogiri stepped in and he just tuned out what I was saying after that. Dabi kinda tried to help, I think he gets it a little bit, but he wasn't very convincing. In the end, they just told me I wasn't allowed to give you anymore knives."

Hm. Good to know, and roughly the direction he wanted this conversation to go.

"Wasn't their whole thing about joining the league freedom? How's this any different then things at school if I'm not even allowed to stab someone with a knife one time when they were asking for it?"

The mention of school grabbed Toga's attention more fully. Interesting. She bit at her lip, glancing towards the door and tilting her head slightly. They probably didn't have long until Dabi came back. This was either gonna have to happen soon, or on a different day.

"It is different here- I know it is. Mr. Shigaraki just gets confused sometimes. I think Mr. Kurogiri confuses him. He confuses me too sometimes, he'll say one thing that makes sense, and then just a few hours later say something totally different. They'll come around eventually though!"

That almost sounded like she wasn't gonna give in, but then her hand slipped down to her pocket and produced a mid sized folded knife that she quickly slid over to him.

"Here- I know it's not like the rest of yours, but I thought it might help a bit. Just 'till they realize how important knives are. I know it's hard, but try to keep it a secret, okay?"

"I'll try."

Katsuki nodded as he took the knife and slipped it into his pocket. The whole exchange felt odd- felt fundamentally different than how Katsuki thought it should feel. Like they were two teenagers passing notes or candy in class. Not a murder offering a weapon to someone she'd helped capture. She talked about stabbing, about weapons and pain, like it was porn or something. Something deemed *wrong*, but that most people indulged in anyways. A guilty pleasure.

"Thanks, Toga. Sorry I got you in trouble before."

Her face split into a bright grin, and he realized after the fact he'd used her name- her actual one. Ugh. Well, if anyone in this stupid league deserved it, it was her. What worried him more was that he found himself actually meaning that second part. He didn't like that she'd put herself at risk for him. Even though she was a villain that he shouldn't give a fuck about.

"It's all good! Mr. Shigaraki's not mean or anything. Not to us, he cares about us! Even if he likes to deny it. He still gets upset sometimes, but he's not like other people who scream and lash out and stuff. It really is different here, I promise. You just need some more time to figure that out. I did too at first. It's weird, but good."

Huh.

Katsuki didn't like that that lined up with his experiences with Shigaraki so far. That weird refusal to get angry at him. He knew Shigaraki was capable of violent anger, he'd seen it firsthand. So why were things different now? Why was it different for certain people? And why the fuck was Katsuki on that list of people it was different for?

It sounded too good to be true. It was too good to be true. It had to be. Katsuki didn't want to think about it anymore. Soon it wouldn't matter.

"That... sounds nice." His words were weak, but Toga didn't press him about it. She only nodded again, as if she understood. The thought that maybe she actually did left a sour taste in Katsuki's mouth that lasted, even when Dabi came in with breakfast. Katsuki had to force himself to eat despite it. He was going to need his energy later.

With a new knife in hand, Katsuki had a plan. This time, he swore to himself that he'd see it through. No more mistakes. He was prepared to wait as long as it took for the right moment to appear.

For once though, whatever universal force was dedicated to fucking him over must've taken a day off, because his chance came that very evening.

Masky brought him lunch after he'd returned to his cell to exercise and keep his head clear. The other knocked, but didn't bother to wait for a reply as he entered. He didn't bother to offer the food to Katsuki directly either, opting to set it down on the desk by the books Katsuki hadn't touched since dropping them there. Katsuki shot him a glare,

but didn't stop his push ups. He was almost to three hundred, and like hell he was stopping before that.

"Kurogiri made that for you, he asked me to make sure you were eating, but Dabi said you'd already eaten quite a bit at breakfast, so it's understandable if you aren't hungry yet."

Yeah, no fucking way. Katsuki could be starving and he still wouldn't risk eating that shit. He'd flush it down the toilet instead, so Mistfucker wouldn't have an excuse to try to force it on him.

"I would stick around to ensure you eat later, but alas I have a mission tonight I need to go get ready for. Most of us do. I'm sure you can handle eating on your own."

A mission? Dabi and Toga had also both mentioned preparing for something. Mistfucker would probably be involved too- if they really were in the middle of nowhere as Katsuki suspected, then he was their only transport. Hopefully. Katsuki could handle almost anyone as long as it wasn't Mistfucker or Clone guy. He opened his mouth to ask, but thought better of it. Expressing any interest would be suspicious.

"Spinner will be by in the evening to check on you and bring you some dinner. I'm afraid everyone else will be busy, but it seems you've found a way to pass the time."

Perfect. Absolutely fucking perfect. Katsuki fought back a grin and kept his pace steady so his excitement wouldn't show. Mr. Ugly Scarf was his ideal target, and his key was a bracelet. All he'd need to worry about was getting the drop on him, and making sure he couldn't call the others. Hell, if Katsuki did things right he might even have a few hours before his escape was discovered. That'd be more than enough time.

After waiting long enough to realize Katsuki had no intention of acknowledging his presence, Masky sighed and let himself out. Good. Checking the time, it was 12:18, which meant Katsuki had a few hours before he'd need to change locations. Not that he needed to prepare much.

One shower, a bowl of food down the toilet, and a change of clothes later, Katsuki was ready. He'd switched outfits back to the clothing

he'd been kidnapped in. These were his clothes, and while it was possible that the villains had added trackers or some shit to it, he felt more comfortable in them than anything else. Besides, he'd searched both his shirt and pants up and down ten times over and found nothing. The hidden pockets hadn't even been sewn up, just emptied.

4:30 pm rolled around, and that was Katsuki's cue to leave the room. He kept himself looking casual- or, well, he kept himself looking mildly pissed off. But that was what casual meant for him, even on a good day. Mr. Ugly Scarf was a late riser, so he probably didn't consider it evening until like 6 pm or something, but Katsuki didn't want to risk it. The bowl his lunch had been in was in hand, and that was as good of an excuse as any to head into the dining room.

He set the clean bowl down onto the end of the table near the door to the kitchen, he also tried his gloves at the kitchen door just for the hell of it. It didn't work. Obviously. Still worth a shot.

Dropping himself down into one of the two chairs, he did his best to appear bored. It was hard though, he was excited. He was also testing the chair underneath him. The wood was cheap, but thick. Enough that it was going to do a good bit of damage whenever that asshole arrived.

It took nearly forty-five minutes for the guy to show up, an agonizingly long wait, but not as bad as it could've been.

By the time Mr. Ugly Scarf had arrived, Katsuki had gone through every potential aspect of the looming fight a hundred times. He had every step mapped out, every possibility accounted for. He was sure of it.

When the door slid open, he was so lost in thought he jumped. The good news was Mr. Ugly Scarf was just as on edge as he was. He jolted too, before quickly stepping into the room. One of the villain's arms came up to pick at a few of his scales. As if Katsuki's very presence unsettled him. Good. That was the right fucking reaction. Now he just needed to wait for the moment to strike.

*Not yet.* Katsuki reminded himself, keeping his body lax. His head was cushioned on his arms, and he was glaring at the guy, even as his body tensed and prepared to launch. *Need him closer first.*

"Uh- hey. Shigaraki said to, uh, come by? And get you some dinner? I'm not a great cook, but Dabi mentioned leaving food in the fridge, so, yeah."

Irrelevant, Katsuki had no intention of eating any more of their shitty food. He was going to get the fuck out of here. His lack of response clearly unnerved the other further as the guy shuffled around the edge of the room. A beat of silence passed, and Katsuki watched the guy's... skin ripple? No, it was his scales flexing. God, that was weird. Must be a lizard thing. Now that he thought about it, Katsuki was pretty sure he'd seen Bird-brain do something similar with the feathers on his head. Birds and reptiles were related, right? Was that why they both did it? Ugh. Not important.

"Uh, Toga said you were doing better. Or, well, adjusting? It's kinda a lot. The whole kidnapping thing, but it's probably for the best. I mean, what with how they were treating you."

He sounded like he was trying to convince himself more than anyone else, but Katsuki found himself taken off guard by the statement regardless. The fuck was that supposed to mean? How who was treating him? What bullshit were they tricked into believing? Katsuki had been fucking fine. He'd had his shit handled like always.

Katsuki might've asked about it, but Mr. Ugly Scarf moved himself into the perfect position, and Katsuki refused to waste the chance when the other's eyes darted off him and towards the kitchen door.

In an instant, Katsuki was up and the chair he'd been sitting in was in his hands. He brought the back of it down onto the bastard's scaly head *hard*. The wood splintered, the guy went down, but Katsuki wasn't expecting him to stay that way.

Quickly, before the other could recover, Katsuki grabbed at his upper body, smashing him against the floor with as much force as he could muster. Remembering Dabi's words, he made sure to keep one hands on either side of the guy's body, so if the fucker managed to call out that voice activated bullshit, Katsuki wouldn't be the only one suffering.

Twice more he saw the guys eyes open, yanked him up and smashed him back down against the floor. Katsuki really didn't want to risk strangling him- he didn't know enough about reptile biology to know if that would even be effective or what. But that was his next move if



the guy kept fighting.

Luckily, fourth time did the trick. Mr. Ugly Scarf was down, not dead, fuck no, but seriously dazed with his eyes shut. Just what Katsuki wanted.

First things first, he grabbed at the guy's wrist. The bracelet was on tight. Katsuki was pretty sure he scraped off a few scales in the process of getting it off, but he couldn't bring himself to care. Bastard deserved it, and he couldn't risk damaging the electronics by cutting it.

Key in hand, he went and dug through the guy's pockets. He had a gaming console on him- some little hand held thing that Katsuki tossed aside without a second thought, shattering the screen. Ugh, where was-

Fuck yeah, he pulled out the guy's phone triumphantly. His triumph was lessened when he flicked it on and discovered it was jailbroken with a custom OS. No chance of calling 911 without the password, and it had a an actual password on it too instead of a fingerprint.

Oh well, the important part was that this bastard couldn't let the others know Katsuki got out. Phone in hand, Katsuki scrambled up, making his way over the door and shoving the bracelet up against the reader- moment of truth.

Click.

Fuck.

Yes.

The door slid open, and Katsuki was out into the hallway in a flash. He only paused for a moment, pulling out his knife and driving it through the phone, smashing through the screen to completely disable it and then dropping the ruined device on the ground. He couldn't risk

them tracking him with it. Or the guy using it if he got out into the hallway.

The moment that was done, he darted to the end of the hallway and used the bracelet again, this time letting him out into the garden area.

It wasn't dark outside yet, and Katsuki was grateful for that. He'd have enough sunlight to get going and figure out his position, and by the time those fuckers were back, he'd have the cover of night to hide in. All he had to do was get out.

To that end, he glanced over the three doors. Nothing stood out about any of them, so he stuck with his original plan and went right. Clone guy had been going this way to get to the lab. A lab meant supplies, and with any luck an exit. As long as he got these fucking gloves off though, that'd be good enough.

Through the left door, he was faced with yet another set of doors. Three on each side of the hallway, and one at the end. Fuck. None of them were marked- because of course they fucking weren't, but...

Dust. Of course. The whole place had a layer of dust to it, and quickly Katsuki inspected the doors near him. Almost all of them looked disused. One of them though, the first on the left, had clearly been opened several times recently. The wall near it had scratches, as did the floor, indicating stuff had been moved in and out of there at some point. That was his best bet.

Now he just had to fucking hope Mr. Ugly Scarf had access to the labs. He'd assumed, but-

Click.

Hell yeah, he was in. The door slid open to reveal stairs and Katsuki's heart leapt.

Only, the stairs only went down. They didn't appear to have any lighting, which was fine, Katsuki had decent night vision. But that wasn't a great indication that there was an exit down there. Going further underground increased the risk that he'd be trapped too. Still, he wanted these fucking gloves off too badly to waste time opening the other doors. He *needed* to get them off. Everything would be okay

once he had his quirk back.

He took the stairs two at a time, nearly flying down four flights before he arrived. There wasn't another door at the bottom, it just opened up into a big room.

Huh.

It wasn't exactly what he'd expected. No weapons in development, no Nomu in tubes, nothing but a bunch of empty tables and counters that looked like they hadn't been used in ages and a big computer near the far wall of the room.

Stepping farther into the room, Katsuki took a more thorough look around. His eye caught on something to his right. It looked like- huh. Not all the tables were empty then.

One of the table had a huge dusty map laid out on it. The map was old, paper brittle and yellowed at it's edges from the years, but otherwise was a standard map of Japan. What wasn't standard was the red pins stuck into it. Each pin was numbered. There were hundreds of them. What the fuck?

For a moment, Katsuki was sure he'd discovered a map of hideouts. He was torn between victory and fear, because fuck yeah, but also there were *so many pins*. That couldn't be right.

As he got closer, he realized some of the locations were familiar to him. Hero agencies. Police offices. Not all of them, but a fair amount all had numbers. Were these points of interest? Spots to attack?

That couldn't be right either, because the bar in Kamino was pinned. Katsuki was puzzled, but he didn't have time to figure it out now, no matter how much he wanted to. The map was too big for him to risk taking it with him. It also looked dated, this thing probably wasn't actively used much anymore if the layer of dust was anything to go off of.

Still, he took one last long look at it, committing as much of it to memory as he could. He picked out as many patterns as he could with the numbers- the bar was a lower number, so maybe those were more important? Hero agencies seemed higher up for sure. He tried to focus

on the spots that weren't familiar to him for several seconds, and then he turned away to inspect the rest of the room.

There were cabinets on the far wall, some of which weren't too dusty and might have shit in them. If not, he'd go for the computer next.

The cabinets were locked, but his knife got through them easily enough. Unfortunately, they didn't have much in them. Just beakers that he considered shattering, glass would be safer to cut the gloves with since it was less conductive, but a heat source would be better. His hands could withstand high heats- way fucking higher than the electronics in the glove could. If he fried those, then he could cut the fabric off safely.

He'd been about to give up and head for the computer when the very last cabinet in the row revealed a fucking gold mine- an old Bunsen Burner. One with gas still installed, and spare canisters next to it. There was more glassware too, but Katsuki ignored it in favor of grabbing the burner and a spare thing of gas. This was fucking it. Fucking thing even had a built in sparker. Must be Christmas come early.

Katsuki set his prize down on the nearest table, fiddling with it as he tried to figure out the right configuration. It took him a few minutes to realize the gas tank in it was dead- figures- and then another few to figure out how to change the tank. Finally though, he had it, and he was sure this was going to work.

Twisting the tip into the right position to open the valve, he pressed the button that should spark. It clicked, he heard it. No fire though. He tried again. He could hear the fucking gas, maybe it was too much? Slowing the gas flow, he pressed the button again, fucking praying that it would-

A cone of blue fire flared to life in front of his eyes, and Katsuki could've fucking wept with joy.

He lifted one hand up, ready to burn these awful fucking gloves off and then-

The fire vanished. It took him a moment to realize the entire lab was gone. Inky blackness had engulfed him.

NO.

Panic overtook his brain, even as he rematerialized under too bright lights. He lashed out, scratching at his own throat, his mouth, trying to get it out. When he realized it wasn't there, that there was a foggy figure in front of him, he threw himself forward. Desperate to *hurt*, to *escape*, to *get these fucking gloves off*.

Nothing he tried did anything. His blows wouldn't connect. Fabric ripped under his hands, but there was no flesh. No blood. No progress. No escape.

Eventually the fog and fabric disappeared. Katsuki pounded his fists against whatever he could reach. He screamed himself hoarse, snarling, punching, kicking, *trying*.

By the end of it all, he was so exhausted he couldn't even drag himself to bed. He passed out on the floor, curled in on himself. A pathetic fucking mess. At some point, he'd cried. He was too far gone to care about the tears streaked down his face. He was too far gone to even notice he'd been sobbing until he'd stopped.

When he woke up from an exhausted dreamless sleep, it was 7 AM (*it was 6 am, it was 6 am, it was 6 am*), and he was in bed. Someone had moved him and cleaned his face up. The thought made his skin crawl, but he found it hard to care. He found it hard to care about anything.

The only evidence the day before had been real were the bruises and full body ache from his fit. The knife was gone. The key he'd stolen was gone. Everything was gone.

Katsuki was too fucking tired to deal with this. He just- he just needed more sleep.

His body refused to actually fall back asleep, but he lay motionless and thoughtless for an indeterminate period of time before a knock at the door forced his brain to restart.

Silence stretched out in the room. Speaking felt impossible. It didn't matter what he said or did anyways, so why bother?

Another knock. Katsuki stayed silent.

“Spitfire? You awake?”

Ah. It was Dabi. Katsuki stayed silent.

“I’m pretty sure you’re up. It okay if I come in?”

Ugh. This was so fucking annoying. Dabi knocked again after a minute. Katsuki forced a noise from his mouth, a groan. Even he wasn’t sure what that meant, but Dabi took it as permission. Maybe it was. Katsuki couldn’t find it in himself to protest as the door slid open. The footsteps went a step forward, paused, then made their way over to the bed. Katsuki was on his side, turned away from the door. His eyes were still shut. He had no intention of opening them.

After a long moment, Dabi sat himself down on the bed.

“I’ll admit, you almost had that one. Fuckin’ impressive how far you got. Spinner just lucked out, his console was still working and he managed to send the boss a message through some game they both play.”

Of fucking course he had. Katsuki should’ve taken the console too, should’ve thought ahead but he’d been so fucking ready to get the gloves off. He fucked up again. He deserved this.

“Handsy got pretty pissed. Mostly at himself I think. Nearly lost his mind hearing you almost burned your hands off.”

Spite surged in Katsuki, and it was enough for him to summon the energy to speak. His throat was dry and raspy, but he spat the words out anyways.

“My hands are fuckin’ fireproof. I woulda been fine.”

He could feel Dabi’s grin, even if he couldn’t see it.

“Was wondering how long you’d keep quiet. I’ll tell him that, I kinda suspected what with the explosions. Hopefully he’ll chill the fuck out about it.”

“Whatever.”

“How are you feeling?”

Katsuki almost told him to fuck off. Snapping about how he was fucking kidnapped was tempting, but ultimately too much work. Instead he just let out a long, pained groan.

“Yeah, I figured. You kinda lost your shit when Foghead brought you back. Not that I blame you. but the aftermath for that sorta breakdown is a bitch and a half. Hell, for a while we thought you might work yourself up to an actual heart attack. Foghead wanted to sedate you, but after how poorly that went last time, Handsy didn’t want to risk it.”

Thank fucking god.

“Biggest thing you should know is Ms. Vampire’s not allowed to be alone with you anymore. Too many incidents for her to be trusted round 'ya without supervision. Boss wasn’t be too mad at her though, since your actual weapon was a chair this time.”

Well, he should’ve seen that coming. Still, he hadn’t lied to her. Might still be a chance to get another knife.

Somehow, the possibility wasn’t as promising as before. He was too fucking tired to be hopeful.

“I know you’re not big on touching, but you gonna be okay if I help you sit up? I need to get at least one of these shakes and some water in you.”

Right. Eating and drinking. He was definitely dehydrated, and at nearly 24 hours without food. All he felt was empty, but he knew logically he needed to eat and drink. Any physical contact was going to fucking suck, but he wasn’t going to be able to sit up on his own. His body was basically made of lead at this point.

Nodding, Katsuki kept his body lax as Dabi pulled him upwards, adjusting the pillows behind him before letting him lean back against them.

A straw was tapped to his lips, and Katsuki drank slowly. Even this felt like too much.

Dabi chattered at him as he slowly drank down the protein shake. He assumed it was strawberry, but he couldn't tell. Tasting shit took too much energy. After that, he got a short break, and then there was another straw. Just water this time. More meaningless chatter. Then he was getting laid back down. One hand came up to tousle his hair gently, and Katsuki fucking hated himself, but he leaned in to the soft gesture. Everything fucking hurt, and that shit felt nice, and if anyone wanted to give him crap over it, they could fuck right the hell off.

He was so fucking tired.

Even after he'd finished, Dabi stuck around. Still talking about nothing. The background noise seemed to be the missing piece Katsuki needed to drift off to sleep again.

When Katsuki woke up in mid-afternoon, he felt better. Not by a lot, but it was enough to stumble to his feet. It was enough that his body complained to him about various shit, like the fact he was still kinda dehydrated, and also really needed to piss. As he forced himself over to the bathroom, he noticed another one of those shakes and a water bottle left on the desk.

Once he was done relieving himself, he looked in the mirror. God, he looked as tired as he felt. He shouldn't be this tired. Yeah, that fit had used up a bit of energy, but he'd felt better after 12 hours straight of hardcore training, so what the fuck?

Whatever it was, he was gonna need to get over it soon. Not right now though. Right now he grabbed the water bottle and the shake, pausing to inspect both. The water bottle was still sealed and looked clear, probably safe. The shake was harder to tell, at least until he checked the bottom of the bottle it was in and found the plastic had been burned lightly in five spots. Fingertip sized spots. Dabi made it then.

He chugged both, then dragged his ass back to bed. If he still felt this tired tomorrow, he'd force himself through it, but it wasn't like he was going to get anywhere tonight. It took longer for his eyes to fall shut,



but eventually he found himself fading out.

Morning came too soon.

He was still tired, but it wasn't as bad as it was before.

The empty feeling was back. But he ignored it. His anger returned, fire starting to burn within him. That was enough to drive him out of bed at 7 AM, at 6 AM, and into the shower. He scrubbed himself raw, changed clothes, and left his room at his normal time. And left his cell at the same time he had most mornings before.

Dabi was up, and thank fucking god, kept his mouth shut. He just looked Katsuki over once, nodded in greeting, and dragged a surly Toga into the kitchen.

Part of Katsuki was tempted to head into the dining room, he didn't have much else to do in the living room area if Toga wasn't there. But he refrained. Odds are they'd taken the chairs out of there, and he didn't want them to get any ideas about him enjoying being near them. He didn't. He wanted to be as far away from all these fuckers as possible.

Alone in the living room, he sat down in his armchair. In the armchair he'd sat in previously. Time passed slowly when he was alone, so he tried to lose himself in thought as he slouched against the cushioning.

He hoped his classmates were okay. All of them had made it out of the camp incident. That was not nothing. Everyone had gotten out alive and mostly okay according to UA's broadcast.

*'Except for you.'*

Didn't fucking count. He wasn't even hurt. Just mildly fucking inconvenienced.

*'And at the mercy of villains who could get sick of you and kill you at any time.'*

Gee, thanks voice in his fucking head. He was aware of that shit! It was fucking fine. It was fine. He was fine. His skin itched. He wanted to scratch so fucking badly. To dig his fingernails into his flesh until

the itch or his skin was gone. At some point, he didn't care which. That wouldn't even work, he had these stupid fucking gloves on.

Actually, speaking of which, he flexed his fingers. Huh. His nails had grown. Not by that much, but noticeably. They'd have to take the gloves off eventually to cut them, right? These stupid fucking things had to come at some point. He needed them off, he needed them off-

"Hey Kat!"

Oh. That was fast. Toga was there, grinning, though it didn't reach her eyes. It was an odd look on her. She was holding out a plate of food that he numbly took. Vaguely, he registered Dabi taking up his usual position on the far coach.

"Mornin'" He mumbled back after too long. He flexed his hands again. The itch was back. He ignored it. He ignored so many things.

"I heard you and Spinner got in a fight. He was already kinda scared of you, but I don't think he's too mad about it."

Was that a good thing? Katsuki didn't know. He nodded in response. Nodding was often an acceptable response to things. People liked it when he nodded. Most of the time.

"You feeling okay?"

Katsuki jolted at the question. His eyes had gone back to the gloves. He wanted them off. He needed them off. He was so fucking tired.

"Tired is all."

Sniffing at the air, Toga tilted her head and pushed the food he hadn't realized he'd set down towards him.

"You should eat, it's good, I promise. Dabi didn't even let me touch the stove."

Halfheartedly, Katsuki took the plate and shoveled some of the- what was it? Fried rice? That seemed right- into his mouth. He wished the fork were real so he could scratch the itch with it, but it was that stupid fucking cardboard substance.

Silence fell between them.

"You smell really sweet today." Was that a compliment or a statement? Or a complaint? She didn't seem as happy about it as she normally did. She didn't seem as happy about anything as she normally was. Toga was off today too. Maybe there was something in the air.

"I always smell sweet." He countered, unable to think of another response.

"I guess." She replied, and went quiet again. It wasn't normal for her to be this quiet. It wasn't normal for Katsuki to be this quiet either. Yet here they were. Two teenagers. Being quiet.

"Mr. Kurogiri said he took your knife again."

"Didn't even fucking stab someone with it this time."

"Yeah. I didn't get it either."

His vision was kinda blurry. The itch was stronger.

Toga moved beside him, but he couldn't tell what she was doing. She seemed to lean over, as if to take a better sniff at him. He didn't have the energy to tell her to back off today.

Something solid slipped down, resting against his leg and the couch.

She shifted back to her own seat, giggling about something but in a way that was an inch to the left of how she normally would've. As if she was impersonating herself.

Glancing up, Katsuki caught Dabi looking away just as he looked up. He'd seen. Katsuki knew he fucking saw that, even as he shifted to ensure the knife Toga just slipped him was hidden from view.

After a few seconds of staring, Dabi's blue eyes met his, and leather clad shoulders lifted ever so slightly in a half shrug.

The guy was really just going to let him get another fucking knife. Holy shit.

*'Not like you managed to do much with the last fucking three.'*

He'd do more this time. He'd do better this time.

His skin itched. It was more of a burning sensation now. Every place the gloves were touching him was on fire. Only that wasn't right, because Katsuki knew what fire felt like and it wasn't fucking this. This was so, so much worse. Katsuki ignored it. He pushed more food into his mouth, and forced himself to chew and nod along with whatever Toga was saying.

By the time Katsuki retreated to his room, his cell, whatever the fuck it was, he should've had a plan in mind. He didn't.

Even the walk back to his room was hard. His vision got worse. Walking in a straight line was near fucking impossible. Katsuki's head was spinning as he fell down onto the bed. Lifting his arms was a struggle, but he needed to do this. He needed to do it now. These gloves had to fucking come off, no matter the fucking risk.

The knife Toga gave him was small. A pocket knife. Not ideal, but he

didn't care. Didn't care about anything but getting these fucking gloves off.

Shaky hands lifted the blade, trying to get it under the fabric near his wrist. He couldn't see what he was doing. Couldn't feel the difference between those awful fucking gloves and his skin which was burning. The blade slipped, but he tried again, he needed to try again. Kept fucking trying, movements getting desperate and panicked. *He needed the fucking gloves off.*

Finally, finally, the blade caught on fabric. It tore and ripped, catching in places but he just put more force behind it and Katsuki was sure he felt his muscles spasm from electricity, but it didn't matter because the moment the fabric was cut, he could feel sweat starting to form again and he lit. it. up.

Nothing in his life had ever, or would ever feel better than that explosion forming in his palm. It was pure relief. He sighed softly, letting his eyes fall shut. His hand was sweating, practically dripping like a faucet.

His hand- his whole arm was actually really fucking wet now that he thought about it. There was no way he was sweating that much.

Katsuki forced his eyes open, fear surged in him as he blinked and took in the amount of red covering his arm. Covering his whole upper body. His shirt was soaked with it.

That was a lot of blood. Was it really all his? His arm didn't hurt- at least he was pretty sure it didn't hurt. If it was hurting, he couldn't feel it.

Vision getting blurry again, Katsuki had a sinking feeling in his stomach. In retrospect, this might not have been his smartest idea.

He let out another explosion, weaker this time. Oh well.

At least he'd gotten one of those stupid fucking gloves off.

## Chapter End Notes

Arguably, Toga has been the most successful at befriending Katsuki. It's just that her idea of friendship is fundamentally dangerous to literally everyone involved.

Next chapter; Katsuki meets new people, and surprise, he hates all of them!

## End Notes

You can find more of my weird ideas on my [tumblr](#) or come chill in my [discord server](#).

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